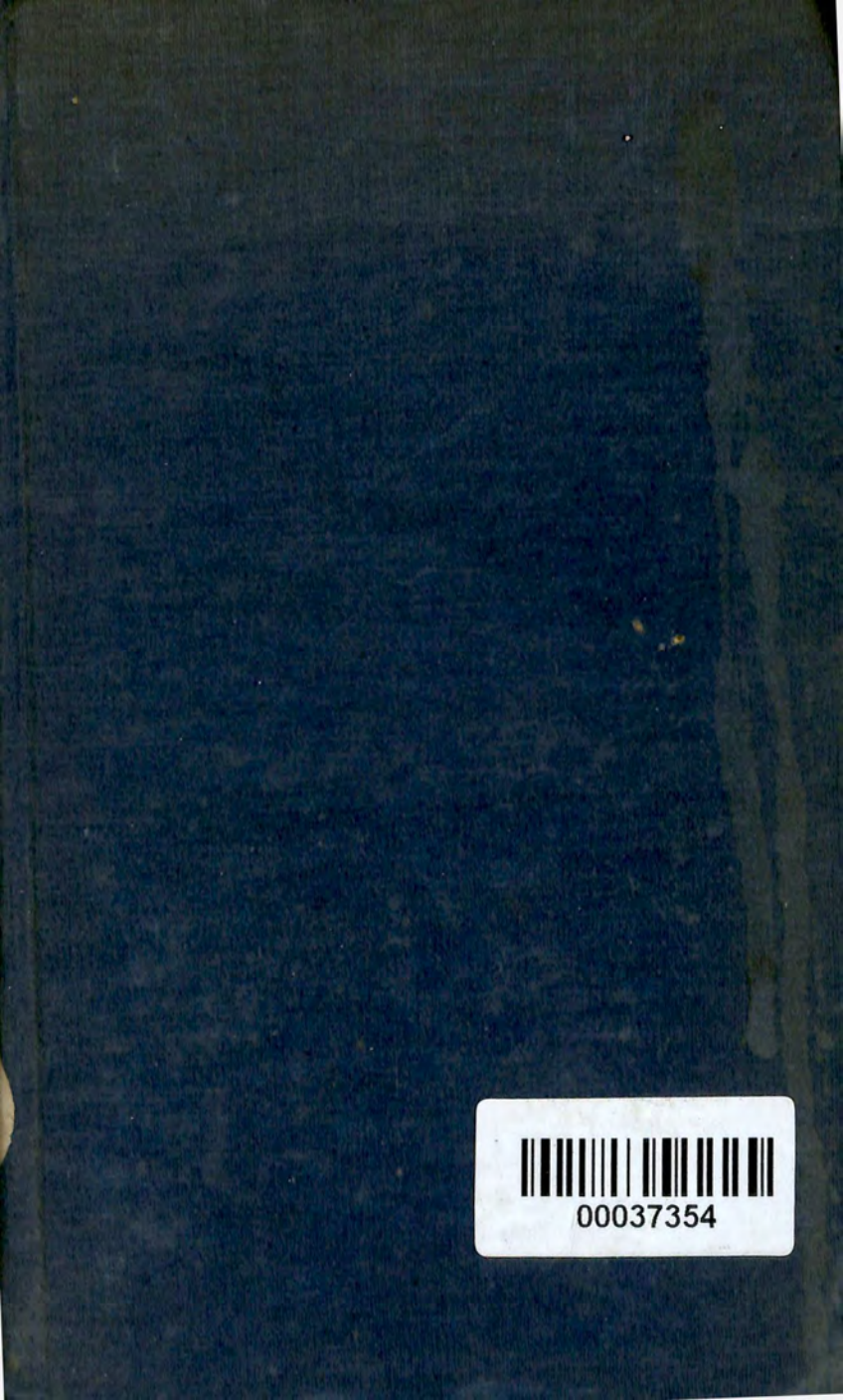
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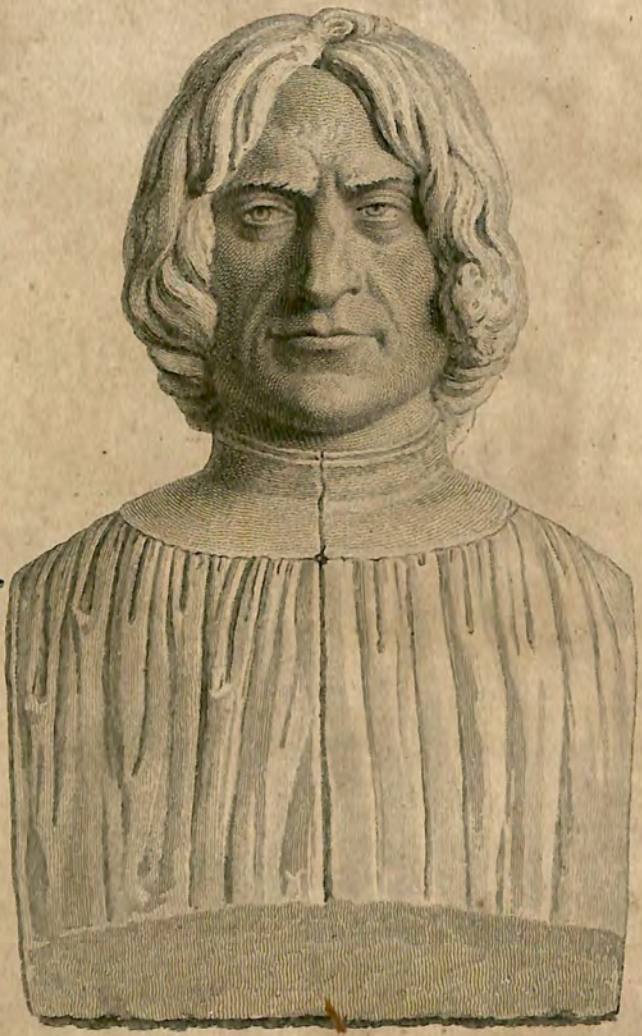

Drawn & Engraved by Edw. Smith.

LORENZO DE MEDICI.

From a Bust by Michaelagnolo presented by the Marquis Cappeni of Florence to the Author.

ILLUSTRATIONS,

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL,

OF THE

LIFE

OF

LORENZO DE' MEDICI,

CALLED

THE MAGNIFICENT;

WITH AN

APPENDIX

OF

ORIGINAL AND OTHER DOCUMENTS.

37354

BY

WILLIAM ROSCOE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, STRAND;

AND W. BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH.

1822.

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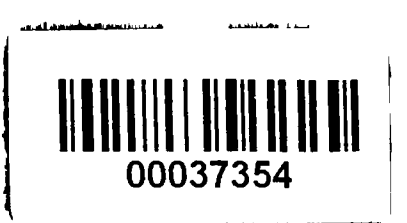

CANZONE

DI

T. J. MATHIAS

A

GUGLIELMO ROSCOE.

ALL' INSIGNE

E BENEMERITO DELLA REPUBBLICA LETTERARIA

GUGLIELMO ROSCOE,

BIOGRAFO INGLESE

DEL MAGNIFICO LORENZO DE' MEDICI,

&c. &c. &c.

PRESENTANDOGLI

LA STORIA DELLA POESIA ITALIANA
DEL TIRABOSCHI.

CANZONE.

Or che de' vati al luminoso coro
M'inchino, e, all' ombre lor gradite in seno,
Volgo il ciglio sereno,
(Sentendo con sì grave altero affetto
Scuoter da Febo il verdeggiante alloro,)
A te, signor di stil sì vago e dolce
Che l' alma alletta e molce,
Tra facondi scrittor ministro eletto
A ravvivar di Clio l' estinta lampa,

A te gli strali altisonanti all' etra
Dalla Tosca faretra
Spingo, con quell' ardor ch' entro m' avvampa,
De' volgari cantor fuor dalla plebe
Ora Sorga mirando, or Dirce e Tebe.

Invoco te, che con sì chiara luce
L' ordin spiegasti e le fortune è i fati
De' secoli passati,
E l' opre antiche, e l' aureo lor costume,
Che cara all' alma riverenza induce.
Vedi larghi sgorgar fecondi rivi
Da puri fonti Argivi,
Lieti a mischiarsi col Toscano fiume
Nel corso unito sì, non più straniero;
Mira spiegar le Muse amici vanni
Sovra i dotti Britanni,
Fidate guide in non comun sentiero,
E de' lor sacri ingegni in nobil suolo
Drizzar sublime ed instancabil volo.

Ma qual sorger si vede Ombra sdegnosa
Sull' afflitta sua Patria, oppressa e doma
Da dura indegna soma
E dall' urto d' idee sfrenate e nove,
Con sua schiera immortal, trista e pensosa!
Piange Lorenzo l' abbattuto soglio,
E spento il santo orgoglio

Sulla fucina affumicata, dove
(Non sazio ancor) lo Dio dell' armi insano
D' oro e di ferro a fabbricar già venne
La *consolar* bipenne,
Rotto lo scettro; onde, al voler profano
Del popol vincitor, Gange ed Egitto
Fremendo udir' lo spaventoso editto.

L' odo da quella sua lira celeste
Note svegliar della dolcezza antica
Con diletta fatica,
E a te volgendo il maestoso volto
Grate corde temprar non più funeste:
" O mio leggiadro (ei grida) almo sostegno,
O del Mediceo regno,
Per te dal nero obblio mai sempre tolto,
Façondo difensor! frémeva indarno
Ne' Fiesolani chiostri il suon dell' armi
Tra rotti bronzi e marmi,
Astro sorgesti inaspettato all' Arno;
E già pel bujo lo chiaror discerno,
E delle Tosche glorie il germe eterno.

" Accesi mira in sì raggiante torma
Questi miei Genj alle bell' arti intenti
Ed a' tuoi vaghi accenti;
Nella spogliata loro antica reggia
Per te la lor virtù non fia che dorma,

(Per poco invan folgoreggiata a terra
Con sì barbara guerra,)
Ma risvegliata al ciel sorger si veggia.
L' alma, che il divo suo principio vide;
Ricchezze, dignità, cose mortali,
Beni caduchi e frali,
Non sprezza no, ma lascia al mondo, e ride;
Altre palme aspettando in alto siede,
E di cetra immortal luce richiede.

" Braman *da te* novelli onori e rari
Nel Vaticano lor l' elette Muse
Di lieta speme infuse,
E d' alti ingegni il concistorio antico,
Di grazia e di saper esempj chiari,
E d' artefici illustri il coro ardente;
Vago, dolce e possente
Sorride Rafaello in viso amico;
E la divina e fiera Ombra superba
Segna di novo sua terribil via,
E giù dall' alto invia
Lampi che forse a sè *tua* patria serba;
Rischiara dunque alla mia Flora il ciglio,
E del Padre l' onor rendi al gran Figlio.

" Da' gioghi Ascrei l'aura soave spira
Risvegliatrice di sovrani ingegni
D' antica gloria degni:

Già lo splendor di Bergamo t' invio,
(Nè a celebrarlo invan forse altri aspira,)
A cui ne' cori eterni Apollo accorse,
E tanto onor gli porse
Che l' entrata maggior di Pindo aprìo.
Vedo co i due gran Toschi il Savonese;
E di Ferrara e di Sorrento i lumi,
E lungo i noti fiumi
L' arpa aurata temprar sento il Pavese;
Par che ciascun s' accordi, e offrirti s' oda
Di facondia e di grazia augusta loda.

" Vedi (ma non temer) in sè ravvolta
Già dell' arti la cuna, or fossa e tomba,
Mentre fiammeggia e piomba
Anche sul cener suo straniero brando,
L' Italia oppressa, abbandonata, incolta:
Vedi con piume abbiette i cigni afflitti,
Desolati, trafitti,
E le sacre sorelle or messe in bando.
Ma quì si posi il duol: l' alma contrada
Di morte non vedrà l' ultima sera,
(Ben so la voce è vera:)
Le stelle e l' aureo sol l' eterea strada
Apron di novo, e d' atre nubi a scorno
Non mai tramonterà d' Italia il giorno."

Qui tacque l'Ombra, e al suo sparir scoperse
Da nube accesa un bel raggiante Quadro
Di pennello leggiadro;
Di marmo e di diamante alta colonna
Con Tosche imprese e lettre ivi s' offerse,
E presso quella ergendo a braccio ignudo
Lancia, tridente, e scudo,
Sorgeva altera e maestosa Donna
Ch' ora il suolo guardava, ed ora il mare;
E scolte di sua man su base eterna,
(Sì che 'l mondo le scerna,)
Vi si leggeva in note ardenti e chiare,
Dell' Italia al Sostegno! e udiasi intanto
Or di Marte fragor, di Febo or canto.

Canzon, se mai quell' onorata riva
Vedi del fiume a te non caro indarno,
Salutala nel nome in cui ti fidi:
Sei di straniera cetra ardito suono,
Ma pur d' amor sei dono;
E se negletta giaci e ignota all' Arno,
T' è forse assai che del Tamigi ai lidi
Alzasti *prima* i trionfali gridi.

T. J. MATHIAS.

Marzo, 1803.

PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.

PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.

UPWARDS of twenty-five years have elapsed since the publication of the LIFE OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI. During that time, considerable additions have been made to the political and literary history of Italy; many original and valuable documents have been produced, and the labours of several distinguished writers, as well here as abroad, have given a greater interest to the subject.

Under these circumstances the history of the Life of Lorenzo has occasionally been the object of reference and of criticism; and whilst the merits and the talents of that distinguished Individual have, on the one hand, been more fully illustrated, attempts have been made, on

the other, to depreciate his character, and doubts have been thrown out as to his being intitled to the high rank which he has so long held in the general estimation. To collect and to place under one point of view the information which has thus been acquired; to give some account of the various writers by whom it has been furnished; to demonstrate that Lorenzo de' Medici has a just claim to the elevated station which he has so long maintained, and to vindicate the fidelity and accuracy of his English biographer against the censures of some foreign writers, the effects of which have extended to this country, are the chief motives which have induced him to submit this additional volume to the indulgence of the public.

For many years past the German scholars have devoted themselves with considerable diligence to the study of Italian literature, and have enriched their own country with many excellent works on that subject. The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici was therefore received by them as the production of a fellow-labourer in the same cause; and a translation into German by Mr. Kurt Sprengel, of Halle, a name known to the lovers of science as well as of literature, appeared at Berlin in the year 1797, accompanied by many interesting notes. To this translation Mr. Sprengel has prefixed a Dedication

to his brother, in which is contained a parallel between the characters of Pericles and Lorenzo de' Medici; an inquiry so novel in its object, and so applicable to that of the present publication—the further illustration of the character and conduct of Lorenzo—as to supply a deficiency which before existed; on which account I have thought it advisable to present it to the reader in an English translation, for which I am indebted to an individual of my own family, (*a*)

A French translation of the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici by M. François Thurot, appeared at Paris in the year 1799; a period when the reaction of the popular party was as violent as the attack made upon that country by foreign powers was unjust. To this Translation is prefixed a letter from the Translator, to Citizen Jean-Barthelemi Lecouteulx; (*b*) in which, after some observations and criticisms on the work, M. Thurot accuses me of too manifest a partiality for my hero; "who although," as he admits, "he possessed great qualities, and even some of those virtues requisite in those who are

(*a*) v. *Appendix, No.* I.

(*b*) The reader may peruse this prefatory letter in the *Appendix, No.* II.

destined to command, was *devoured by an immoderate ambition*, which induced him more than once to *abandon the interests of his country, and openly to violate the precepts of that religion to which he pretended to be so deeply devoted.*" After so decided an opinion, it might have been expected that M. Thurot would, in the course of the notes with which he has occasionally honoured my work, have availed himself of some opportunity of demonstrating the justice of his decision, and would have pointed out some of those instances in which Lorenzo was led to sacrifice to his own ambitious views the interests of his country; but of this I can discover no traces. The supposition that Lorenzo pretended to be devoted in a more particular manner to the dogmas of the Romish faith, is equally void of foundation. That he was actuated by a deep religious feeling, may be inferred from his sacred poems and hymns; but these are in general of too elevated and abstract a character to be considered as a homage to the principles of any sect or doctrine, and may perhaps justly be described as being more imbued with the sublime principles of the Platonic philosophy, than with the tenets of any particular church.

After having thus attempted to diminish the character of the hero of the work, M. Thurot

has entered upon an express critique of his biographer, whom he charges with some errors of considerable importance, and particularly with "*not having perceived,* or having *been afraid to assert,* that the state of Florence was subject to a radical defect, which caused the destruction of the Republics of Greece and Rome, the *vice of hereditary succession.*" As M. Thurot seems to have granted me the choice of two imputations, I shall avail myself of his permission to reply to the former only, and shall freely confess, that it never occurred to me that the *vice of hereditary succession,* as he has chosen to call it, was the *cause* of the destruction of the liberties of any of the republics to which he has alluded, however it may be considered as the *consequence* of it. In the state of Florence, in particular, the liberties of the republic had existed under the popular influence of the Medici, in direct opposition as well to an aristocratical as to a monarchical government, for several generations; and it was not till long after the death of Lorenzo, that events of a very different nature, particularly the powerful intervention of the House of Austria, threw the reins of government into the hands of a branch of the Medici, derived from Lorenzo, the brother of Cosmo; the individuals of which for nearly a century had been jealous of, and frequently acted in opposition to, the more popular de-

scendants of Cosmo. With an attention however to my character as an historian, of which I cannot but feel the value, M. Thurot has supposed, that "as I was the subject of a monarchical government, *I might think myself bound not to enter upon a more particular explanation on this head;*" and that besides, "*the English carry almost to superstition the respect which they have for their laws and their constitution.*" Amongst my countrymen thus characterized I shall always think it an honour to be enumerated; but M. Thurot may be assured that this devotion to my country imposed no restriction on my political sentiments, and that, whatever may be my errors, there was nothing that I had occasion to conceal.

When the Abbe de Sade published his very lively and interesting memoirs for the Life of Petrarca, he complained of the indifference shewn by the Literati of Italy to a work intended to do justice to one of their most distinguished characters. This complaint, as far as regards the history of Lorenzo, I have had no occasion to repeat. Not only have they looked with a favourable eye on labours calculated to extend his celebrity, but have associated with their national literature the productions of a stranger, who had ventured to speak to them, in a northern language, on the character and

merits of some of the most eminent of their countrymen. In the year 1784, a Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, written in Latin, by the late Monsignore Angelo Fabroni, a prelate of the church, and *Proveditore* or Principal of the university of Pisa, had been published at that place.*(a)* With this valuable work I was unacquainted, until I had made a considerable progress in my own; but the additional information, and the documents which it contained, rendered me, in its continuation, the most essential service. On the arrival of my work in Italy, it had the good fortune to meet with the approbation of that truly liberal and distinguished scholar, who honoured it with a kind of notice, of which it would be difficult to find in the annals of literature, a similar instance. Although it had been his intention to procure for his countrymen a translation of his Latin Life of Lorenzo, yet he no sooner received the English work, than he changed this intention, and prevailed upon the Cavaliero Gaetano Mecherini, a young nobleman of Pisa, to translate the English work into Italian; which version was accordingly executed with sufficient elegance and ability, and published at Pisa under the express

(a) Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita, Auctore Angelo Fabronio Academiæ Pisanæ Curatore, 2 tom. 4to. Pisis, 1784.

patronage of Fabroni. *(a)* In his preface to this publication, the translator has introduced some remarks, in which he has endeavoured to discriminate the characters of the two works, and has assigned the reasons for translating the English work in preference to the Latin, in a manner of which I have upon the whole no reason to complain. *(b)*

Not long after the publication of my work, I received, through the obliging attention of the late earl of Bristol, bishop of Derry, then in Italy, a copy in manuscript of a professed critique on the Life of Lorenzo, the production of a learned foreigner, who appeared to be well acquainted with the subject, and fully competent to judge of the various topics there discussed. Although this piece was sent me without the name of the author, I did not long remain in doubt on that head, another copy having been obligingly transmitted to me by Francis Drake, Esq., with the information that it was the production of the late Abate Andres, who, although he was a native of Spain, is well known by his proficiency in Italian literature, and particularly as the author of the extensive work,

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(a) Vita di Lorenzo de' Medici detto il Magnifico, del Dottore Guglielmo Roscoe; Versione dall' Inglese. 4 *tom.* 8°. *Pisa,* 1799.

(b) v. Appendix, No. III.

"*On the Origin, Progress, and Present State of every branch of Literature;*" (*a*) which is a lasting monument of the erudition, taste, and judgment of the author. In these observations the learned Abate, after honouring the Life of Lorenzo with some general commendations, which may perhaps be thought far beyond its merits, has adverted to several errors and defects which, as he conceives, detract from its value. As it is not improbable that similar ideas may have occurred to other readers, and as I have no wish to deprive the world of the sentiments of this eminent critic, I have given the piece referred to amongst the documents at the end of the present volume; (*b*) and shall here avail myself of the opportunity of replying as briefly as possible to such of his observations as seem to me to be of sufficient importance to deserve particular notice.

From the general tenor of his remarks, the learned Abate appears to have considered my work in a light in which it was never intended to be viewed; and to have examined it as a general history of the revival of letters and science

(*a*) *Dell' origine, progressi, e stato attuale d'ogni Letteratura.* 7 *tom.* 4°.

(*b*) *v. Appendix, No.* IV.

in the fifteenth century.' Under this idea it is certain no production can be more imperfect; nor could I have had the presumption to suppose myself equal to a task, which would have required nothing less than a thorough and habitual acquaintance with every particular subject which I might have had occasion to discuss. But on further reflection it would have occurred to the Abate, that I had only undertaken to write the life of an Individual, and that all other subjects are only introduced as far as they may illustrate his character, and distinctly shew the share which he had in the improvements that took place during his lifetime in the various departments of literature and art. In the sketches of the progress of these studies prior to the time of Lorenzo, it was not my intention to give their full history, but merely to shew the state they were in when operated upon by his personal talents, or promoted by his favour and munificence. The extent to which these previous inquiries have been carried, may perhaps seem to require some apology in a professed biographer; but it can scarcely be imputed to him as a culpable omission, that he has not entered into discussions which were as foreign from his purpose as they were inconsistent with the title of his book.

Nor can I allow another observation of the

Abate Andres to remain unanswered. That I should have "deviated from the path of historical and ingenuous impartiality," or, in other words, have been guilty of misrepresenting an important fact in the narrative which I have given of the conduct of Sixtus IV. in the conspiracy of the Pazzi, involves not only an error of judgment, but even affects the good faith of my work. Incredible, however, as it may appear that the supreme pontiff should have been an accomplice in the crime of deliberate murder, it is no less certain that this weighty imputation on his character rests upon evidence too explicit to be misunderstood, and too strong to be refuted. Even the process of Montesicco, cited in the Appendix to the Life of Lorenzo, (No. XXVII.,) and to which the Abate himself refers, as tending to shew *the very small part* which the Pope had in the business, is an incontestable proof of his guilt. It is true he appears to have used some degree of artifice when the person who was intended to have been the immediate instrument of the murder was introduced to his presence, and to have expressed his desire that the change in the Florentine government should be effected "*without the shedding of blood*;" but when Riario imprudently asked him, in the presence of Montesicco, whether, "*in case their object could not be effected without bloodshed*," his holiness would not par-

don those who committed the deed, the only reply made by the Pope was, "*tu sei una bestia*,"—"thou art a beast;" "as if he reproved him," says the Florentine commentator, "for asking such a question; for that the Pope consented to the murder, the following words of Montesicco sufficiently demonstrate." The words thus referred to are as follow: "We then took our leave of his holiness, being satisfied of his intentions to give us every assistance in his power, either by an armed force or otherwise, as might be necessary; and, in parting, the Archbishop said, '*Holy father, you are then contented that we shall steer this vessel, for we shall steer it well?*' To which the Pope replied, '*I am contented.*" If, indeed, the pontiff could be allowed to avail himself of the scandalous evasion which he seems to have employed, his subsequent conduct, in sending a body of troops to protect the conspirators in the execution of the deed, would sufficiently demonstrate that he was not an inactive party, and that in pretending that the change in the Florentine government was to be accomplished without the shedding of blood, he only added the most odious hypocrisy to the most sanguinary designs.

Since the publication of the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, a very curious and valuable docu-

ment, relating to the subject last mentioned, has been discovered in the *Archivio delle Riformagioni*, at Florence. This instrument purports to be an answer from the magistrates of Florence to the extraordinary and violent letter of Sixtus IV., in which he attempts to prevail on the Florentines to expel Lorenzo from their city as a tyrant, and an enemy to the common interests of Christendom. This piece was printed a few years since, accompanied with the observations of some learned but anonymous critic; and as I apprehend, it has not yet been laid before the public at large, I have thought it advisable to give it as extensive a circulation as in my power, by reprinting it amongst the documents in this volume.(*a*)

The observations made by the learned annotator on my own work are of so trivial a nature, as would scarcely have called for a reply, had I not been anxious to remove an imputation which I apprehend has been unjustly cast on a writer of distinguished character and ability, whose memory I have every reason to hold

(*a*) Lettre inedite de la Seigneurie de Florence au Pape Sixt. IV. 24 Juillet, 1478, 4to. (Paris.) *v. Appendix, No.* V.

in the sincerest respect. To the observations respecting my Life of Lorenzo, I shall briefly observe, that if, in a few instances, I have used the expression, "*archives of Florence*" in a general sense, as applying to documents preserved there in public collections, I can scarcely concede to the annotator, that "this mode of expression is *in every point of view incorrect*;" much less "that it confuses together collections essentially distinct, as well as the consequences resulting from them." The authenticity of an historical document is surely not to be determined solely by the place where it has been preserved; and if it were, I know of no cause to suspect, nor has the commentator attempted to shew that any one of the archives of Florence, which he has so particularly described, possesses any advantages in point of credit and authenticity above the others.

But whatever my own obligations to this writer may be, I cannot observe without pain and regret the remarks which he has thought proper to make on the character and writings of the late Monsignore Fabroni, the tendency of which is to demonstrate that he was deterred by disgraceful timidity and servile considerations, from laying before the public the docu-

ments necessary to the proper illustration of his history; and that "he is to be ranked amongst those writers, "who have been led by their prejudices, their interest, their opinion, or what they call prudence, and many other motives, to alter, mutilate, or suppress authentic documents of certain authority, and of evident facts."

In support of so grave a charge against an author, who now exists only in his writings and in his fame, what are the proofs which the learned annotator has been able to adduce? We are first informed that "M. Fabroni, as well before as after he became curator of the University of Pisa, had every facility of consulting the public archives of Florence; that he had always lived on terms of intimacy with the conservators, as well of the archives of the republic, as of those of the Medici family, to each of whom he has in his preface expressed his acknowledgments; that whilst he resided at Pisa he frequently visited Florence, was well received at court, and had views of being appointed instructor of the Archduke Ferdinand and his brothers; that he had great obligations to the grand Duke Leopold, to whose brother (the Emperor Joseph II.) he dedicated his Life of Lorenzo de' Medici; that he was already a prelate of the church, and that it was

supposed he aspired to the cardinalate." Surely this very minute statement was scarcely necessary to prove that Fabroni had the full opportunity of inspecting those records which are preserved in the different archives of Florence; but where is the evidence that the document in question was ever seen by him? much less that he had unjustly suppressed it?—In the immense mass of papers which he had to examine, is it surprizing that some pieces, even of importance, might have escaped his observation?—Or is it to be expected that an historian should lay before the public every voucher and authority connected with his subject? Surely something must be conceded to the judgment of a writer, as well as to the sufficiency of the evidence he may bring forwards for the establishment of any particular fact, as to the apprehensions he may entertain of wearying the patience of his readers; without having recourse to those disgraceful motives which the Annotator seems willing to attribute to the worthy prelate in the following passage: "If it should be thought extraordinary that Monsig. Fabroni has not published this letter, although he must have had a knowledge of it, one may find the key of the silence resulting from this suppression in his own words; *I should fear the reprehension of prudent persons if I were to publish such things.*" "*Vererer reprehensionem prudentum quod talia ediderim.*" These indeed are *in part* the *words*

of Fabroni, preparatory to his laying before his readers the act of the Florentine synod, a document nearly similar to that published by Mr. Egerton; but did Fabroni then shrink from his duty and suppress the piece to which these words relate? On the contrary, although he was aware of the censure to which it might expose him, although "*he had views of preferment, and even aspired to the cardinalate,*" he fairly brought that most important and singular document before the public. Nor was the passage from which the above words are partially and unfairly extracted, intended by Fabroni as an *excuse* for not publishing, but as a *reason* for publishing the act of the synod. The whole passage is as follows: "I should fear the reprehension of the prudent, in promulgating matters so injurious to Pope Sixtus, *were it not the duty of an historian to relate every thing that is said and done;*"(a) and accordingly he has printed in his appendix the piece to which this passage relates.

If the accusation of the learned annotator stood in need of further refutation, it would be

(a) "Vererer reprehensionem prudentum, quod *talia injuriosa sane Sixto Pontifici* ediderim, *nisi Historici munus esset referre omnia quæ dicta et acta sunt.*"—*Fabr. Vita Laun. Adnot.* 136.

found in the simple fact "of the publication by Fabroni of this extraordinary production; which in point of vehemence against the head of the church, infinitely exceeds that which he is charged with having suppressed through timid and unworthy motives. In this piece, Sixtus IV. is not only openly accused of the murder of Giuliano de' Medici, but is denominated, *Diaboli Vicarius qui Christianissimum quemque adortus est.*"

Had the letter printed by Mr. Egerton tended in any degree to invalidate the facts related by Fabroni, it might indeed have raised a presumption that Fabroni had intentionally suppressed it; but what motive could he possibly have for withholding a document which would have given so strong a collateral proof of the veracity of his own narrative? If Fabroni had been living, I have no doubt it would have been as gratifying to him as it is now to me, to find our respective statements confirmed by such full and indisputable evidence. It is therefore futile, if not improper, to place the letter last published in competition with the act of the Florentine synod, which had a similar object in view, or to inquire which of them is intitled to the greatest share of credit. The fact is, that these two documents emanated from two different bodies of the citizens of Florence. The one from the *priori*, or chief magistrates of the Re-

public, assembled in their public deliberations; the other from the Florentine clergy, convoked in a synod. Both these bodies have endeavoured to express in the strongest terms their attachment to Lorenzo de' Medici, their indignation against the pontiff, and their contempt of his threats; but the churchmen have evidently the advantage, and the unrestrained adoption of the language and figures of Scripture, applied to stigmatize the head of the Roman church, gives to the whole piece a singular character of ecclesiastical sarcasm and scurrility. Instead therefore of being considered as in opposition, these pieces should properly be placed in conjunction, as proving the authenticity of each other; whilst at the same time they display the firmness and independence with which the Florentines could reject the prejudices of superstition, and the resolution they had adopted of sacrificing all that was dear to them in defence of the man whom they considered as the chief glory of their country.

But if I can by no means assent to the remarks of the learned annotator on the motives and conduct of Fabroni, as little can I approve of the concluding paragraphs of his observations, in which he has indulged himself in reflections on "the perversion by historians in general, of characters, incidents, and facts;" on

"the assumption by error of the vestments of truth;" and in asserting that "history, deprived of historical veracity, yet remains *a tale to be told;*" reflections which, whether just or not in fact, are not warranted by any thing which he has been able to adduce in the course of his remarks.

In the year 1810 there appeared at Bologna a professed critique on some passages in the English Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, intitled, "*Two Dissertations of Pompilio Pozzetti, late Professor and Librarian in the Royal University of Bologna, on some passages in the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici;*"(*a*) in which the learned professor has dignified me with a title to which I have no claim; a mistake into which he was probably led by the Cavaliero Mecherini in his translation of the Life of Lorenzo. To the critical writings of Pozzetti, I had occasionally referred in that work; and the very natural desire of correcting an expression in which he conceives I have misunderstood his meaning, seems to have led him to take a more general review of my work, and to comment upon some

(*a*) *Due Dissertazioni di Pompilio Pozzetti, Professor emerito e Bibliotecario nella Regia Universitá d' Bologna, &c. sopra alcuni passi della vita di Lorenzo de' Medici, scritta dal* Dottore *Guglielmo Roscoe,* 8°. *Bologna,* 1810.

of the subjects there discussed. Of these, the principal are, *the Character of Leo Battista Alberti; the merits of the Poetry of Lorenzo de' Medici;* the *introduction of the press into Venice;* the conduct *of Paul* II. *with respect to the literati of his time,* and some *remarks on Politiano, Filelfo,* and *Pico* of Mirandola; and also on *Savonarola,* and *Pier Leoni,* the physician who attended Lorenzo de' Medici in his last illness, and whose body was found thrown into a pit, soon after the death of his patron.

For an answer to this work, as far as it affects the character and credit of my own narrative, I may with safety rely on the remarks on that subject, by the Conte Cav. Luigi Bossi of Milan, (the translator into Italian of the English Life and Pontificate of Leo X.)(*a*) intitled "*Observations on Two Dissertations of Pompilio Pozzetti on some passages in the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, &c.,*" and inserted in the twelfth volume of that translation.(*b*) As the

(*a*) *Vita e Pontificato di Leone X. di Guglielmo Roscoe, autore della vita di Lorenzo de' Medici; tradotta e corredata di annotazione e da alcuni Documenti inedite dal Conte Cav. Luigi Bossi Milanese, tom* xii. 8°. *Milano,* 1817, *&c.*

(*b*) *Osservazioni sulle due Dissertazioni di Pompilio Pozzetti sopra alcuni passi della vita di Lorenzo de' Medici, &c.*

style of literary urbanity adopted by Count Bossi in these observations is in perfect accordance with my own feelings towards the professor, and as this piece is perhaps still more appropriate to the Life of Lorenzo than to that of Leo X., I have thought proper to reprint it amongst the documents in the present volume. (*a*) But although the answer of Count Bossi is drawn up with his usual and acknowledged ability, and sufficiently refutes the charges brought by the professor against my work, yet this will not prevent me from availing myself, in the course of the ensuing annotations, of such opportunities as may occur of giving some of the remarks of the learned professor a further consideration; in which I shall endeavour to state my reasons for differing with him in opinion, in such terms as are due to so candid a critic, and so industrious a fellow-laborer in the same cause.

The History of the Italian Republics of the Middle Ages, by M. Simonde de Sismondi, (*b*) is a work of great ability, and displays a sagacity in deducing effects from their causes, and

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(*a*) *v. Appendix, No.* VI.

(*b*) *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du moyen âge. Par J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi,* 16 *tom.* 8°. *Paris.*

of ascertaining causes from their effects, which, if its author had not suffered himself at times to be led too far by the very power of his genius and the strength of his own flight, would have rendered it one of the most splendid monuments of historical excellence that the present age has produced. There is also reason to presume that the opinions of the author, on some of the most important subjects, have been insensibly affected by the events and circumstances of the times in which the work was written, and that the liberal spirit which pervades the whole has been influenced and contracted by the idea that political and civil liberty can only be embodied in a particular form, and combined with a particular system of government. Indications of this sentiment appear in the very commencement of his work. "One of the most important deductions," says he, "that we can draw from the study of history is, that the government is the principal cause of the character of a people; that the virtues and the vices of nations, their vigor or their imbecility, their acquirements or their ignorance, are scarcely ever the effect of climate, the attributes of a particular race, but are the result of their own laws; that every thing was given by nature to all, but that *the government either secures to, or deprives those*

who submit to it, of the inheritance of the human race." (*a*)

On this, the fundamental principle of his work, it might perhaps be observed, that if the government influences the people, the people also influence the government, which is, in fact, only the result or spirit of the national character; insomuch that it has been acutely and truly said, *that the government of any country can never be much worse than the people deserve.* In whatever manner governments were first established, they must have been originally formed according to the temper, ability, and views of those by whom they were constituted; and not only have been, but still are, rather a result than a cause. And although the government and the people must always have a

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(*a*) " L'une des plus importantes conclusions que l'on puisse tirer de l'étude de l'histoire, c'est que le gouvernement est la cause première du caractère des peuples ; que les vertus ou les vices des nations, leur énergie ou leur mollesse, leurs talens, leurs lumières ou leur ignorance, ne sont presque jamais les effets du climat, les attributs d'une race particulière, *mais l'ouvrage des lois ;* que tout fut donné à tous par la nature, mais que le gouvernement enlève ou garantie aux hommes qui lui sont soumis l'héritage de l'espèce humaine."

Sism. Rep. Ital. Introd. p. 1.

constant reaction on each other, yet it must be admitted as an incontrovertible maxim, that *it ultimately rests with a people to modify their government according to their own character and their own will.*

It is upon the stability of the principle here contended for, that the hopes of mankind, and the expectations of their progress and improvement, entirely depend. If the form of government can compress the energies of a people in such a manner as to bind them down to a prescribed and invariable rule of action, all efforts to relieve themselves must be vain; and as every government must deteriorate and become more tyrannical, unless corrected from time to time, the fortunes of the human race would be entirely hopeless. What would be the condition of the people, if their happiness or their misery, their debasement or their improvement, did not, essentially and ultimately, depend upon themselves? Or what can be more invigorating to a nation than the reflection, that if they choose to cultivate and exert the talents and powers which nature has given them, and to exalt themselves in the scale of intellectual and moral beings, the improvement thus acquired will unavoidably be reflected in the form of their government, as well as in all their other

institutions and concerns? In fact, all other modes of amending society are mere fallacious and empirical remedies, which, instead of removing, generally serve to increase and aggravate the disorders of which we complain. It is not, therefore, without a considerable share of regret, that we find M. de Sismondi affording his countenance to measures of violence and bloodshed; and recommending the dangerous, inefficient, and horrible practice of reforming governments by means of conspiracies and assassinations, as I am sorry to have occasion hereafter to shew he has too often done.

Having, however, taken this first step, it naturally follows, in the estimation of M. de Sismondi, that some particular form of government is pre-eminent, and intitled to an absolute and unqualified preference over the rest; and it is not difficult to perceive that he supposes this to exist in that of a Republic alone. Whether this opinion be well-founded or not, it would be foreign to our present purpose to inquire; but it is evident that a work written under the influence of a particular hypothesis is not likely, on all occasions, to exhibit that impartiality which can only be derived from a total absence of all prejudices, and a determination that the principles to be established shall

be drawn from the facts, and not that the facts shall be so represented as to confirm the principles.

These observations are important to our present purpose; for it is, I conceive, from the great extent to which this predilection of the author for his favorite system has been carried, that we are to account for his hostility to the Medici, and in particular to the character of Lorenzo. Actuated by a just abhorrence of the despotic authority established in Tuscany in the sixteenth century, he has suffered his resentment to recoil on the earlier branches of the family, and has supposed, in contradiction to the general voice of history, that the republican chiefs of the Medici, for more than a century the advocates of popular rights and the favorites and champions of the people, were employed, through successive generations, in consulting only their own ambitious views, and in laying the foundation for that despotism which, in the course of the century after the death of Lorenzo, was established in Tuscany.

Impressed with this idea, he has lost no opportunity of attacking the character of Lorenzo de' Medici, wherever he thought it assailable; contending that *his public measures were al-*

ways injurious to the liberties of his country; that *he corrupted his fellow-citizens by ostentatious and expensive spectacles;* that *he had incurred the resentment of his countrymen by his tyrannical measures;* that *the conspiracy of the Pazzi was a struggle for liberty, justifiable in the circumstances under which it took place;* that *by his political conduct he diminished the importance of Florence in the affairs of Italy;* in short, that *he is so far from being the great character represented, that he is not to be placed in the rank of great men, or even to be considered as a superior person in poetry, in philosophy, or in art.* Although these charges in a great degree refute each other, yet I shall, in the course of the following annotations, take an opportunity of giving them, in the order in which they occur, a full, and I trust a satisfactory reply. At the same time that M. de Sismondi has advanced an opinion of Lorenzo so wholly different from that which has hitherto been entertained of him, he has also thought proper to impeach in strong terms the fidelity of his biographer, and to assert that "*I have exalted the services of the family, extenuated or glossed over their crimes, and dissimulated or concealed the independent and resentful spirit of the Florentines, which was far from submitting willingly to the yoke of a prince, al-*

though they suffered their liberties to be invaded by a faction." (*a*)

Whether, as M. de Sismondi has ventured to assert, I have glossed over the crimes of the Medici, and concealed the resentful spirit of the Florentines towards them, the reader will perhaps be better able to judge, after perusing the answers given to these charges in the subsequent part of the present volume; but there is another imputation in the work of M. de Sismondi, to which, as it applies exclusively to my own character as a writer, I shall avail myself of the present opportunity to reply. "One may be on one's guard," says he, "against the partiality of a factious person, who writes for a party; against the flatterer of a prince, who writes for his sovereign; even against a citizen, who wishes to enhance the glory of his country; but could one have supposed, that at the end of three hundred years, and at a distance of three hundred leagues, the author of the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici would have em-

(*a*) "M. Roscoe, rehausse tous les services de la famille; il atténue, ou passe sous silence ses forfaits; il dissimule enfin l'esprit indépendent et ombrageux des Florentins, qui étoient encore bien éloignés de plier volontairement sous le joug d'un prince, encore qu'ils laissassent ébranler leur liberté par une faction."—*Hist. des Repub. Ital.* xi. *p.* 6.

ployed his talents *in deceiving both himself and others as to the importance, the claims, and the virtues of his hero.* (a)

In acquitting me of those corrupt motives which may possibly, at times, have actuated the pen of the historian, M. de Sismondi has only done me justice, but in amusing himself with the singular idea, that in the narrative I have given of the life and character of Lorenzo de' Medici, I have "*imposed both on myself and others,*" he must not expect to make many converts to his opinion. M. de Sismondi must know, or, if not, he will ere long learn, that however an author may impose upon himself, it is not so easy a matter to impose upon the public, who seldom or never fail, whatever may be their temporary mistakes, to come to a right decision at last. That I possess, or have pretended to possess, any arts of persuasion to inforce my opinions, or have any peculiar mode

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(a) On se tient en garde contre la partialité d'un factieux, qui écrit pour son parti, du flatteur d'un prince qui écrit pour son souverain, même d'un citoyen qui veut relever la gloire de sa patrie ; mais devoit-on s'attendre à ce qu'à trois cents ans et trois cents lieues de distance, un habile écrivain emploieroit la plus vaste érudition à *se tromper lui-même aussi bien que les autres, sur l'importance, les droits, et les vertus de son héros.*" —*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 85, *Note.*

of making "*the worse appear the better reason*," M. de Sismondi will not, I presume, seriously assert; and if he means to do more than this, and to insinuate, as he sometimes seems inclined to do, that I have concealed, altered, or perverted the truth of history; that I have stated any circumstance which I did not believe to be true, or asserted any opinion which I did not entertain, I hope he will not expect the public to receive as proofs of his accusation, the unsupported assertions which are found in his works, and to which the sequel of the present volume will, I trust, afford a sufficient reply.

A moment's consideration might indeed have shewn M. de Sismondi the absurdity of supposing that the author of a work like the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, written on the affairs of a country foreign to that of the writer, and which he had never visited, could have imposed upon those of his own countrymen who were most conversant with Italian literature and Italian history; many of whom had obtained upon the spot the fullest information on the subject, and had past, in those attractive regions, a considerable portion of their time. (*a*) But supposing

(*a*) Instead of adverting to numerous letters and documents with which the kindness of my friends and correspondents has furnished me, I shall beg leave to refer my readers to a

this to have been the case; and that, by perverted facts, spurious authorities, and plausible representations, he had succeeded in such an attempt, was it likely that this delusion could have extended also to the country to which the work in question relates? Was it possible that many of the most eminent scholars in Italy, who were at the head of its literary establishments, and through the course of a long life had distinguished themselves by their own numerous and inestimable works on every subject connected with the literary history of Italy, should also have been deceived by this daring attempt; and not only have honoured the Life of Lorenzo with their approbation, but have admitted the author to their friendship and correspondence, and exerted themselves on every occasion in assisting his further researches, and promoting his views? Yet that this most extraordinary result must, according to M. de Sismondi's assertion, have been the case, will sufficiently appear from the letters given in the Appendix, selected from many others from the same persons in the pos-

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letter of the late Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, (a writer not remarkable for assenting to historical facts without examination) published in the general collection of his works, and containing his opinion on this subject; to which I shall here add another letter from the same distinguished author, written on his receiving the second volume of my work. *v. Appendix, No.* VII.

session of the author.(a) Amongst these is the late venerable and learned Angelo Maria Bandini, for upwards of half a century chief librarian of the Laurentian library at Florence, and author of the excellent and laborious catalogue in twelve volumes folio, which has opened the treasures of that immense collection to the learned in every part of Christendom. In the course of his long life, which was extended to upwards of ninety, he also edited many valuable remains of Italian literature, and published several works of his own which greatly illustrate the character of Lorenzo de' Medici. Of all men living, Bandini had the best opportunity of obtaining full and correct information on this subject; but so far was this from having led him to adopt the opinions of M. de Sismondi, that he has omitted no occasion where he could do honour to the memory of Lorenzo, towards whom he appears to have entertained a peculiar attachment which never fails to warm his feelings and exalt his style, whenever he has occasion to mention him. I must also beg leave again to refer to the late prelate Fabroni, whose biographical memoirs of many of the most celebrated of his countrymen, and particularly his more extensive histories of the lives of Cosmo

(a) *v. Appendix, No.* VIII.

and Lorenzo de' Medici, and of Leo X., written in a style of classical latinity, have obtained for him the applause of the learned throughout Europe. In preparing for these last mentioned works, Fabroni, as before remarked, employed himself for several years in searching the public archives at Florence, and in collecting whatever could elucidate his subject. Is it then possible, if I had been guilty of the gross misrepresentations imputed to me by M. de Sismondi, that my work could have obtained the approbation of this distinguished scholar to such an extent as appears, from his letters given in the appendix, to have been the case? Nor was this the only proof of the candour and liberality of his disposition. The friendly correspondence which then commenced between us was continued till nearly the period of his death. Circumstances which have at least left me the consolation of reflecting, that whatever the fate of my own works may be, I have been associated in these studies with men who will be considered, whilst any regard for true learning remains, as amongst the first scholars of the age in which they lived.

In thus defending myself against the charges of M. de Sismondi, I begin to fear that I may be thought to have followed the example of M. Menage, who, when attacked by Baillet in his

Jugemens des Sçavans, brought forwards in his defence in his *Anti-Baillet*, the authority of all those numerous writers who had honoured him with their approbation, and requested his antagonist to answer them. I shall therefore only add to the names of the great Italian scholars, now no more, who have expressed their decided approbation of the English Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, that of the Abate Jacopo Morelli, late principal librarian of St. Mark, at Venice, whose eminent acquirements in almost every department of literature are known wherever such studies have an existence, and whose favour and liberality towards me were evinced by the present, at various times, of many valuable documents, both printed and manuscript, which have rendered me essential service in the course of my inquiries. (*a*)

With the loss of these eminent men, who had during their lives so essentially contributed to support the literary character of Italy, I considered my intercourse with that country as nearly terminated; but I have since at different times had the satisfaction to find that the efforts I had made to elucidate its history and recal its past glories were not forgotten; and that

(*a*) *v. Appendix, No.* IX.

even in the midst of that once flourishing city to which my narrative chiefly relates, I had been so fortunate as to conciliate the approbation and regard of some of those who had distinguished themselves by their proficiency in similar pursuits. Amongst these I may be allowed to refer to an author who is yet living, the course of whose studies has qualified him in a particular manner to decide upon a question which relates to the fidelity and accuracy of Tuscan history. In the year 1805, the Rev. Domenico Moreni, Canon of the Church of S. Lorenzo at Florence, published "*A bibliographical and historical Catalogue of Tuscany, and of the Writers who have illustrated the History of the Cities, Places, and Persons belonging thereto;*" (*a*) a work executed with equal industry, learning, and ability, and essentially necessary to all those who may devote their attention to the same subject. The object of this publication is to give the reader a competent idea of the utility and merits of the works enumerated, as well manuscript as printed. In the course of it he has had occasion to advert to the English Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, and its translation into Italian by

(*a*) *Bibliografia Storico-Ragionata della Toscana; o sia Catalogo degli Scrittori che hanno illustrata la Storia delle città, luoghi e persone della medesima. Firen.* 1805, 2 *tom.* 4°.

the Cav. Mecherini, which he has characterized in a manner sufficiently favorable to demonstrate that he considered it as a meritorious and authentic work. (*a*) Not satisfied however with the honour thus conferred on a stranger, who had presumed to write on the affairs of his country, he, a few years afterwards, availed himself of the occasion of publishing a Latin tract of *Pet. Ang. Bargæus*, an eminent scholar of the sixteenth century, to prefix to it a Latin dedication, in which he has borne so decided a testimony to the authenticity of my work as I hope will justify me on the present occasion in laying it before the reader; notwithstanding the consciousness I cannot but feel, that the terms in which the learned author has thought proper to express himself of my historical writings are far beyond their merits, and must in a great degree be attributed to that partiality to which a similarity

(*a*) "Contiene questa Vita (di Lorenzo de' Medici) l'Istoria di gran parte della Famiglia Medicea, e di tutto ciò, che il secolo xv. produsse di grande nell' Italica, per non dire Fiorentina Letteratura, e nelle belle arti, &c. All' Avv. Cav. Gaetano Mecherini, Pisano, che l'ha tradotta con fedeltà ed eliganza in Italiano, e stampata magnificamente *in Pisa nel* 1799, *per Antonio Peverata, in tom.* iv. *in* 8°. dobbiamo esser grati; mentre ha fatto conoscere all' Italia un opera si bella, che sembra fatta per l'Italia, e che nell' Italia dovea esser fatta."—*Moreni Bib. Storico-Ragionata, &c. tom.* ii. *p.* 267.

of sentiment and opinion seldom fails to give rise. (*a*)

If however neither the literati of England or of Italy could detect the fraud that has been practised on their credulity, it is at least fortunate for the world that M. de Sismondi has been enabled to correct this imposition. To what happy discovery, to what more exact information, to what superior industry or sagacity, we are to attribute this new light on a subject upwards of three centuries old, we are not favored with the slightest information. That which was hidden from Macchiavelli and Guicciardini, both of them ready, from political enmity, to apportion to the individuals of the Medici family their full share of blame, is revealed to M. de Sismondi. Galuzzi and Pignotti, the most distinguished historians of Tuscany in modern times, have been equally unsuccessful. Neither *the hatred of the Florentines to Lorenzo de' Medici*, nor *the patriotism of the assassins in the conspiracy of the Pazzi;* neither *the hostility of Lorenzo to the liberties of his country*, nor *her degradation by the weakness of his political conduct*—are articles to be found in the creed of any of the eminent histo-

(*a*) *v. Appendix, No.* X.

rians to whom I have before referred; but are to be considered as the peculiar opinions of a writer, who, however splendid his talents may be, has afforded no evidence to his readers that, on the particular subject upon which he has so peremptorily decided, he has employed a portion of attention and research to be compared in any degree to that of many of those writers, who, with more impartiality, though less assumption, have preceded him on the same subject.

In laying before the public such additional proofs and documents as the kindness of my friends, or my own researches, have placed within my power, for vindicating the representations which I have already given to the public of the life and character of Lorenzo de' Medici, I trust it will not be understood that I conceive that the work to which they relate stands in need of any other evidence to satisfy any impartial and candid mind, than such as it bears within itself, and is confirmed by the very numerous authorities to which I have there diligently referred. From these it will sufficiently appear, that the man whose character I have attempted to illustrate was not only distinguished above the rest of his countrymen, but, when considered with respect to the variety and extent of his talents, was one

of the most extraordinary persons that any age or country has produced. That, to whatever subject he applied himself, he displayed that superiority and originality which *genius* alone can give. That, in his intimate acquaintance with the philosophy of the times, in the variety of his poetical compositions, in the acknowledged refinement of his taste, and his encouragement of the fine arts, he has few equals in any one of these departments, and in the union of them all was certainly never excelled. But a much higher praise awaits him. Whatever efforts may have been made to deprive him of the honours so justly his due, it was he who was the first person in modern times to oppose to the lawless violence and outrage of war the voice of reason, and the dictates of justice and common sense; to perceive the political relations of the different states of Christendom, and to balance and reconcile their various interests, so as to produce the general tranquillity; and to set an example which, if it had been successfully followed, might have prevented ages of contention and bloodshed, and enabled us to date, from the commencement of the sixteenth century, the great career of human improvement. But although I feel confident that these will be the convictions of every impartial reader of his short but active life, I have not thought it advisable to suffer his memory to rest without a

further vindication. Having, through a sincere and disinterested admiration, endeavoured to raise a monument worthy of his fame, I cannot remain in silent indifference, and suffer it to be defaced by the hands of prejudice and malice, or insulted by the attacks of ignorance and spleen. I have therefore endeavoured to secure it by an additional defence, which may keep at a distance the rude feet that would trample on his ashes, and may secure my own labours against similar attacks.

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

THE LIFE OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

ILLUSTRATIONS,

&c.

I.

v. Preface to the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, 4to. Ed. p. v. 8vo. Ed. p. ix.

"*Possessed of a genius more original and versatile perhaps than any of his countrymen, he has led the way in some of the most valuable species of poetic composition, and some of his productions stand unrivalled amongst those of his countrymen to the present day.*"

Some Italian writers have of late expressed opinions respecting the poetical talents of Lorenzo de' Medici, differing from those which I have ventured to advance in the history of his life; and whilst they admit that his writings possess great merit, have supposed that this is not sufficient to allow them to rank as high as has been represented in the scale of poetical excellence. Amongst those who have discussed this subject is the Professor Pozzetti, who in

the first of his Two Dissertations on the English Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, remarks as follows: "Either I greatly deceive myself, or the verses of Lorenzo, although in themselves estimable, are not adorned with such *exquisite beauties* as to allow us to assert, with our author, that *some of them may bear a comparison with the most celebrated productions* of the present day;" (*a*) to which he adds, "Let us leave it to those—

——*Beloved of equal Jove,*

to decide, whether any of the Poems of Lorenzo can stand in competition with those which have secured eternal fame to the great authors of our own times—to the Alfieri, the Arici, the Bondi, the Cesarotti, the Fantoni, the Lamberti, the Mascheroni, the Mazza, the Monti, the Parini, the Pignotti, the Pindemonti, the Savioli, Varano, &c." (*b*)

(*a*) "E a dirsi più presto, o m'inganno altamente, che le rime de lui, benchè pregevoli, non si fregiano in sostanza di tali esquisite bellezze per cui sia lecito definire col nostro autore, *che alcune possono andar del pari colle più celebrate de' tempi presenti.*"—*Pozzetti Diss.* I. *p.* 21.

(*b*) Lascieremo infine a coloro,

—— Quos æquus amavit
Jupiter———

il decidere se alcune poesie del Medici reggano al confronto

In reply to these observations, I must in the first place be allowed to remark, that in the passage cited by Pozzetti from the Italian translation of the Life of Lorenzo, the translator has not expressed the meaning of the author with his usual accuracy. From that passage as before given, it will appear, that it was not so much my intention to place the productions of Lorenzo de' Medici in a direct comparison with the *modern poets of Italy*, as to state that there were some particular departments of poetry in which he had not been excelled by any of his countrymen *from his own times* to the present. It was, therefore, evidently in my view to allude to the different species of poetry which had been either invented or cultivated by Lorenzo, and had been followed by his successors in the *three succeeding centuries;* and to contend that in *some of these* he had never been excelled. It is indeed only where the subjects are of a similar nature, that any comparison can take place; and it was therefore as remote from my intention as it would have been absurd, to have made a direct comparison between

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di quelle che hanno assicurata eterna fama ad Ingegni preclarissimi, vivuti e viventi ne' tempi nostri, agli Alfieri, agli Arici, a' Bondi, a' Cesarotti, a' Fantoni, a' Lamberti, a' Mascheroni, a' Mazza, a' Monti, a' Parini, a' Pignotti, a' Pindemonti, a' Savioli, a' Varano, &c."—*Pozz. Disser.* I. p. 28.

the productions of Lorenzo, and those of the Italian writers at the end of the eighteenth and commencement of the nineteenth century. The bold inversions and austere diction of *Alfieri*, who has combined his native language in new forms, and given it a force of which it was not before supposed to be susceptible, as they are the result of a strong and original genius, can be no object of comparison with the works of any preceding writer. The delicate satire and easy verses of *Bondi* and *Parini*, as they apply chiefly to the fashionable amusements and extravagant follies of the present times, could have no prototype in a production of the fifteenth century. In *Monti*, Italy possesses a genius of the highest order; the *favole* of *Pignotti* will be read with pleasure by all those who can be gratified by that species of composition; and the delightful verses of *Ippolito Pindemonte*, the true image of an elegant, correct, and meditative mind, will also furnish a delicious treat to those of a similar taste and temper; but in none of these distinguished moderns do we perceive any points of resemblance by which their productions can be compared with those of Lorenzo de' Medici, whose claims stand upon very different grounds, and cannot be affected by a proficiency made in a style of composition so essentially different from his own.

It will then, I trust, appear, that the only kind of comparison which it was my intention to institute with respect to the writings of Lorenzo, was that which might present itself with those who followed him in succession in the different departments in which he had either emulated his predecessors, or had traced out a new track for himself. In this manner the subject becomes capable of elucidation; and it is in this way only that it has been treated in the History of the Life of Lorenzo, as well as by the numerous and distinguished critics of former times, of whom Pozzetti has himself given so imposing a list; all of whom have contributed their share of applause, and are ranked by him amongst the panegyrists of Lorenzo. Amongst these he had recorded *Pietro Bembo* in his *prose*, *Baldassar Castiglione* in his Cortigiano, *Paullo Giovio*, *Giovanni Vitale* of Palermo and *Pietro Mirteo* of Udine, in their Latin poems, *Benedetto Varchi*, *Guicciardini*, *Giammatteo Toscano* of Milan, *Michele Poccianti*, *Crescimbeni*, *Quadrio*, *Muratori*, and many others. (*a*) Whether all the writers of Italy of

(*a*) " Chi prende a consultare i più accreditati nostri scrittori, fioriti dopo la morte del Magnifico, avvenuto l' anno 1492, incontrera frequenti a segno gli Elogi del suo valore nelle amene lettere da confessare che formano quelli appunto uno stuolo, anzi una successione gloriosa di Panegyristi del

the present day, whom Pozzetti has selected from his illustrious countrymen as the "*heirs of eternal fame*," will, at the expiration of three centuries, stand as high in the estimation of the literati of those times as Lorenzo de' Medici stands with the present, and whether their works will be cited, commented upon, and celebrated by a continued series of critics of every succeeding age, as enlightened and distinguished as those above mentioned, who have thus adverted to the works of Lorenzo, may perhaps admit of a doubt. We are ourselves too deeply imbued with the same tastes and feelings as our contemporaries to allow us to form an impartial and permanent opinion on their literary productions; the voice of fashion sometimes decides when judgment only should be heard, and novelty claims the prize in preference to intrinsic excellence; but posterity

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Medici. Giovi rammentarne alcuni; Pietro Bembo *(nel libro primo delle sue prose)* Baldassar Castiglione *(nel Cortigiano)* Paolo Giovio *(Elogia clarorum virorum, e nella vita di Leone* X. *lib.* i.) Giovanni Vitale Palermitano, e Pietro Mirteo Udinese *(nelle loro Poesie Latine.)* Benedetto Varchi, Il Guicciardini, Giammatteo Toscani Milanese *(in una Lettera a Caterina de' Medici, Reina di Francia, che precede la sua Raccolta intitolata Carmina illustrium poetarum)* Michele Poccianti *(Catalogo de' Scrittori Fiorenti)* Il Crescimbeni, Il Quadrio, Lodovico Antonio Muratori, ed altri moltissimi."—*Pozz. Diss.* I. p. 19.

rehears the decision; and from the immense number of names whose medals are floated down the stream of time, the swans pick up only those that are esteemed worthy to decorate the temple of immortality.

As a further proof that I have estimated too highly the poetical talents of Lorenzo de' Medici, the learned professor has adverted to the opinion of Pico di Mirandola on that subject, to which I had also referred in the Life of Lorenzo, (*a*) but to which it will here be necessary to recur. Pico in a letter addressed to Lorenzo has thus expressed himself; "You have two celebrated Poets in the Florentine language, Francesco Petrarca, and Dante Alighieri; of whom I may observe, in general, that there are some learned persons who conceive that Petrarca is defective in matter, Dante in language. To a person of good ear and sound judgment it will appear that in your works neither of these is wanting, so that it is difficult to say whether the sentiments are more illustrated by the language, or the language by the sentiments. Even in your moments of relaxation, you have touched the mark at which they, with all the power of their faculties, have perhaps

(*a*) 4°. ed. vol. i. p. 311. 8°. ed. vol. i. p. 414.

scarcely arrived."(*a*) On this passage it has been remarked by Benedetto Varchi, that there "was matter sufficient to have justified Pico in commending Lorenzo without unjustly blaming Petrarca and Dante, inasmuch as Lorenzo, together with Poliziano and Benivieni were the first, who in their compositions, discarded the low and vulgar style, and began, if not to imitate, at least to be willing, or appear to be willing, to imitate Petrarca and Dante, laying aside in some degree the common and plebeian manner observable in the *Morgante Maggiore* of Luigi Pulci, and the *Ciriffo Calvaneo* of Luca his brother."(*b*)

That the opinion of Pico on the writings of Lorenzo is a tribute to friendship at the expense of his judgment, no one will be found to deny. So far from considering the compositions of Lo-

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(*a*) "Sunt apud vos duo præcipuè celebrati poetæ Florentinæ linguæ, Franciscus Petrarca et Dantes Aligerius, de quibus illud in universum sim præfatus, esse ex eruditis qui res in Francesco, verba in Dante desiderent. In Te, qui mentem habeat et aures neutrum desideraturum, in quo non sit videre an res oratione an verba sententiis magis illustrentur ... Eo animum remittens pertigisti, quo Illi, omnes animi nervos contendentes, fortasse non pertigerunt."—*Jo. Pici Op.* p. 348.

(*b*) Varchi L'Ercolano. *v.* Life of Lorenzo, 4°. ed. vol. i. p. 311. 8°. ed. vol. i. p. 415.

renzo as intitled to a preference over those of his great predecessors, I have in his life expressly stated the reasons which in my opinion occasioned their inferiority.(a) Yet it must be observed, that the claims of Lorenzo to rank with the great poets of his country have been strongly insisted on by numerous writers, and in particular, by the most accomplished critic and elegant scholar of the Augustan age of Italy, who could have had no such motives of flattery as have been imputed to Pico. The person to whom I allude is the illustrious Baldassar Castiglione, who in his *Libro del Cortigiano* has the following passage: "I cannot conceive how it can be thought proper, instead of enriching our language, and giving it spirit, grandeur, and brilliancy, to render it languid, poor, and colourless, and to reduce it into such limits that every person should be compelled to imitate only Petrarca and Boccaccio, and that we should not also place our confidence in Poliziano, in *Lorenzo de' Medici*, in Francesco Diaceto, and some others who are not only natives of Tuscany, but are perhaps equal in learning and judgment to those writers themselves."—In adverting to this passage,

(a) 4°. ed. vol. i. p. 313. 8°. ed. vol. i. p. 418.

which I had quoted in the original in the Life of Lorenzo(*a*) for the same purpose as I have here repeated it in English, Pozzetti has thought proper to express it as his opinion, that Castiglione did not intend to enumerate Lorenzo *amongst the great fathers of the Italian language*, and that he has only conferred on him *a secondary place.*(*b*) To this opinion I cannot however assent. As models of the Italian language, Castiglione seems to me to place Politiano and Lorenzo de' Medici in the same rank as Petrarca and Boccaccio. It may indeed still be allowed us to doubt, whether his opinion, like that of Pico, be not carried somewhat beyond the bounds which a cautious critic would prescribe to himself; but it must not be forgotten that these decisions have been before the world for upwards of three centuries; and that in the mean time the writings of Lorenzo de' Medici, and of Politiano, have been received equally with those of Petrarca and Boccaccio,

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(*a*) 4°. ed. vol. i. p. 312. 8°. ed. vol. i. p. 417.

(*b*) "Ne si può tampoco inferire col Sig. Roscoe, dal seguente luogo di Baldassar Castiglione che questi contasse Lorenzo *tra i gran Padri della lingua Italiana.* E' manifesto *che gli vengono quivi assegnati unicamente i secondi onori.*"—*Pozzetti, Diss.* I. *p.* 27.

as "*Testi di Lingua*," or classical models of the language of Italy.

As a further vindication of his sentiments as to the inferior character of the poetry of Lorenzo, Professor Pozzetti has referred to the opinion of the judicious Lodovico Antonio Muratori, one of the best critics of the eighteenth century; who in his excellent work, "*Della perfetta poesia Italiana*," has introduced several specimens of the writings of Lorenzo, and accompanied them by critical remarks, to which I had also occasion briefly to refer in the Life of Lorenzo. (*a*) But as the professor places great reliance on the authority of Muratori, I shall beg leave to lay his observations more fully before the reader. The plan of Muratori is to select from the most distinguished poets of Italy the most perfect of their works, and to accompany them with his own critical remarks and elucidations, in order to shew wherein the true excellence of poetry consists. Amongst the examples cited by him for this purpose he has inserted, in different parts of his work, three sonnets of Lorenzo de' Medici, upon each of which he has given a

(*a*) 4°. ed. vol. i. p. 277. 8°. ed. vol. i. p. 370.

distinct critique; but before I submit these to the reader, it may not be improper to state the degree of general estimation in which the poetical character of Lorenzo is viewed by this eminent critic. "The character of Italian poetry," says he, "was kept up after the middle of the fifteenth century by several writers; amongst whom were Girolamo Benivieni, the Count Matteo Maria Bojardo, Antonio Tibaldeo, Serafino dell' Aquila, *and especially Lorenzo de' Medici;* in whose poetry, although I do not perceive *an entire perfection,* yet I discover such beautiful and noble Platonic imagery, such a fine poetical taste, that assuredly he EXCELS IN SOME RESPECTS MANY OF THE MOST CELEBRATED POETS IN OUR LANGUAGE."(*a*)

The critiques of Muratori on the three sonnets of Lorenzo are as follow:

(*a*) "Si mantenne, ciò non ostante dopo la metà di quel secolo in qualche Rimatori la riputazion della nostra poesia, essendo allora fioriti Girolamo Benivieni, Angelo Poliziano, il Conte Matteo Maria Bojardo, Antonio Tibaldeo, Serafino dall' Aquila, e *spezialmente Lorenzo de' Medici*; nelle Rime del quale, benchè non vegga un' intera perfezione, pure io vi truovo sì nobili e vaghe imagini platoniche, sì buon gusto poetico, che sicuramenti EGLI SUPERA IN QUALCHE PREGIO MOLTI ALTRI FAMOSI POETI DELLA NOSTRA LINGUA."—*Muratori della perfetta Poesia, lib.* 1, *p.* 18. *Ed. Ven.* 1770.

" *Più dolce sonno, o placida quiete.*"(*a*)

" If the last verse had taken leave of the reader with more grace and vivacity; this would

(*a*) SONETTO.

Più dolce sonno, o placida quiete ,
Giammai chiuse occhi, o più begli occhi mai,
Quanto quel ch' adombrò li santi rai
Dell' amorose luci altere e liete.
E mentre ster così, chiuse e secrete,
Amor, del tuo valor perdesti assai.
Che l'imperio e la forza che tu hai
La bella vista par ti preste e viete.
Alta e frondosa quercia, ch' interponi
Le frondi tra i begli occhi e Febei raggi,
E somministri l'ombra al bel sopore,
Non temer, benchè Giove irato tuoni,
Non temer sopra te più folgor caggi,
Ma aspetta in cambio, sguardi e stral d'Amore.

Se l' ultimo verso con altra grazia e altra leggiadria di senso desse congedo a chi legge, forse questo sarebbe uno de' lodevoli ed eleganti componimenti che quì si leggessero, non ostante qualche trascuraggine nella favella. E da lodarsi l'astuzia di coloro, che serbano il buono e il meglio a gli ultimi versi delle stanze, de' Quadernarii, de' Terzetti, e molto più al fine di tutto il componimento. Ma il non farlo non è delitto. Delitto bensì, o almen difetto potrà essere il disgustar sul fine i Lettori con languidezza, oscurità, o altro vizio de' pensieri; poich' essi allora più che mai debbono mandarsi via contenti di se stessi e del Poeta. Per altro io scorgo qui alcune figure vivissime, che mi rapiscono. Risplendono queste massimamante nei Quadernarii, benchè io ritruovi anche nel primo Terzetto delle forme di dir poetico, le quali mi pajano gentilissime. In somma con tutti i suoi defetti questo è componimento da pregiarsi assaissimo. E' oro di miniera,

perhaps have been one of the most commendable and elegant pieces in the collection, notwithstanding some confusion in the imagery. The sagacity of those writers is praiseworthy who reserve their finest ideas for the last lines of the *quadernarii* or *terzetti*, and especially for the close of the composition. It is always a blemish, or at least a defect, to disgust the reader at the close with weakness, obscurity, or other faults in the sentiment; because he ought to quit it satisfied with himself and with the poet. In other respects I find in this sonnet the liveliest imagery, which highly delights me. These appear chiefly in the *quadernarii*, although I perceive also in the first *terzetto* forms of poetical expression which appear to me most elegant. In short, with all its defects, this composition is highly to be commended. It is gold from the mine; mixed indeed with a ruder material, BUT IT IS ALWAYS GOLD."

On the second sonnet—

"*Spesso mi torna a mente, anzi giammai*" (*a*)

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mischiato con rozza terra; ma sempre è oro.—*Murat. della Perf. Poesia, lib. 4, tom. 2, p. 323.*

(*a*) SONETTO.

Spesso mi torna a mente, anzi giammai
Non può partir dalla memoria mia
L' abito, il tempo, e'l luogo dove pria
La mia donna gentil fiso mirai.

"Certain flashes of spirit and vivacity are observable in this sonnet, which altogether merits singular approbation. I should place it amongst the best, if the conclusion, which displays admirable novelty, were more accordant to the rule which I have before laid down in book ii. cap. 5. It may also be doubted whether the comparison in the first terzetto be altogether correct and elegant; because the rays of

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Quel che paresse allora, amor tu'l sai,
Che con lei sempre fosti in compagnia;
Quanto vaga, gentil, leggiadra e pia
Non si può dir, ne immaginare assai.
Quando sopra i nevosi ed alti monti
Apollo spande il suo bel lume adorno,
Tali i crin suoi sopra la bianca gonna.
Il tempo e'l luogo non convien ch'io conti,
Che dov' è sì bel sole è sempre giorno,
E paradiso ov' è sì bella donna.

Certi lampi d'ingegno pellegrini e vivaci si possono osservare in questo sonetto, che sottosopra meritano applauso singolare. Io lo porrei ancora fra li ottimi, se la chiusa, che è pieno d'una mirabile novità reggesse alla coppella, il che io ho cercato nel *lib.* ii. *cap.* 5. di questa opera. Potrebbe ancora mettersi in dubbio se la comparazione adoperata nel primo terzetto sia in tutto e per tutto acconcia e leggiadra. Poichè i raggi del sole sparsi sulla neve de' monti non ci fanno propriamente mirare un aureo colore sopra il bianco, come fanno i crini biondi sopra abito bianco. Nondimeno essendo vero, che una certa luce si raccoglie dalla neve percossa dal sole, potrà dirsi, che qui solamente si vuol disegnare quel risalto che faceano i capelli di costei sull' candor delle vesti.—*Murat. Perf. Poesia, lib.* 4. *tom.* 2. *p.* 329.

the sun spread over the mountains do not exhibit a golden colour upon a white ground like light hair upon a white dress. As it may however be true, that a certain degree of light is reflected from the snow when illumined by the rays of the sun, it may also be said, that all that is here meant is the reflection of the lady's hair from the whiteness of her dress."

On the third sonnet—

"*Io ti lasciai pur qui quel lieto giorno.*" (*a*)

(*a*) SONETTO.

Io ti lasciai pur qui quel lieto giorno
Con amore e madonna, anima mia;
Lei con Amor parlando se ne gìa
Si dolcemente, allor che ti sviorno.
Lasso or piangendo, e sospirando torno
Al loco, ove da me fuggisti pria,
Nè te, nè la tua bella compania
Rivèder posso, ovunque miro intorno.
Ben guardo ove la terra è più fiorita,
L'aer fatto più chiar' da quella vista
Ch'or fa del mondo un' altra parte lieta,
E fra me dico, Quinci sei fuggita
Con amore, e madonna, anima trista;
Ma il bel cammino a me mio destin vieta.

Alcune grazie nuove, e sopra tutto una certa dolcezza di pensieri, talmente s'uniscono in questo sonetto, ch'io non ho voluto ometterlo, quantunque mi sembri assai discosto da gli ottimi. Il dire *lei* per *ella*, e *sviorno* per *sviarono*, o non sono errori, perchè hanno degli essempj, o sono errori perdonabili

" Some new graces, and above all a certain delicacy of sentiment, are so united in this sonnet, that I have not been willing to omit it, although it seems to me far removed from the best. The expression of *lei* for *ella*, and *sviorno* for *sviarono*, are either not errors because there are examples for them, or they are pardonable errors in the fifteenth century, which neglected the study of the Italian language."

"Shall we, then," exclaims the Professor Pozzetti, "admit that authoritative decisions of such a character as these, are consistent with productions that are capable of bearing a comparison with the best of those of the present day?" To which I shall only briefly reply, that notwithstanding the objections of Muratori to particular passages, he considers the sonnets he has cited as intitled on the whole to great admiration, as exhibiting proofs of originality and undoubted genius; insomuch that he could not consent to omit even that which he considers as the most inferior of them, in a work which contains only *a few select specimens of the choicest productions of every age*; that with respect to his censures, it is the express object of his work

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al quindicesimo secolo, che fu negligente nello studio della lingua Italiana.—*Murat. della Perf. Poesia, lib. 4, tom. 2, p.* 356.

to shew the defects as well as the beauties of the pieces he has selected; that there are few that have passed through his critical ordeal with less censure than those of Lorenzo, and that whether many of the productions of the Italian writers of the present day would have stood the test equally as well, may justly be considered as a matter of doubt.

In one instance the professor has thought proper to oppose his own decided opinion to one of the most eminent of his countrymen, whose acknowledged taste in works of art, no less than of literature, intitled him whilst living to general esteem. In his Latin life of Lorenzo de' Medici, Monsignore Fabroni has asserted, that "in the charm of his eloquence, the copiousness of his imagery, and the brilliancy of his sentiments, Lorenzo *exceeded all the poets of his own time*, Poliziano only excepted." (*a*) "I should greatly fear," says Pozzetti, "that Giusto da Conti and Serafino dall' Aquila would complain of such a decision." (*b*) Certain, how-

(*a*) "Neque sane habeo quemquam, si Politianum excipiam, in quo tantam verborum elegantiam, imaginum copiam, et sententiarum acumen, quamvis non semper expleat aures meas, admirer."—*Fabr. in vita Laur. p.* 10.

(*b*) Per me ingenuamente protesto di non sentirmi incli-

ever it is, that if those writers had complained, they would have complained without a cause; the former of them being too cold an imitator of Petrarca, to allow his works to vie in poetic spirit with the more original and lively imagery of Lorenzo; and the productions of the latter, to say nothing of their inferiority in other respects, being much more mixed and debased than those of Lorenzo, with that rusticity of style which is regarded as the principal blemish in the poetry of that age.

Having thus replied to such of the observations of the learned professor as seemed to me more particularly deserving of notice, I shall now endeavour, by a more direct and immediate reference to the works of Lorenzo, to justify the passage in my preface which has subjected me to his remarks, and to demonstrate that "*some of his productions stand unrivalled amongst those of his countrymen to the present day.*" These productions, it may be observed, are so diversified as to their subjects,

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nato a preferire, sull' esempio di Monsig. Fabroni (*vita Laurentii Medices, p.* 10.) per la venustà dell' elocuzione, per la copia delle immagini, per l'acume delle sentenze il nostro Lorenzo a tutti i vati del secolo decimoquinto, eccetto il Poliziano. Temerei forte che Giusto da' Conti, e Serafino dell' Aquila se ne lagnassero con ragione.—*Pozz. Diss.* 1. *p.* 27.

as to include almost every species of poetical composition, and in some they exhibit the first example of the kind that appeared in the revival of literature. At a period when dramatic exhibitions were entirely confined to *Rapprezentazioni*, or religious mysteries, it required no common exertion of intellect, and perhaps no common exemption from the superstition of the times, to strike out a different path, and to introduce dramatic characters of a different order; yet a fragment of a dialogue by Lorenzo, entitled "*Amori di Venere e Marte*" has induced the late ingenious author of the "*Essay on the Revival of the Drama in Italy*," (*a*) to concede to Lorenzo the honour of having led the way to the reform of the Italian stage. With yet greater confidence may it be presumed, that the earliest example of the Italian pastoral eclogue is to be found in the pieces of Lorenzo in *terza rima*, (*b*) which relate the complaint of the

(*a*) Mr. Joseph Cooper Walker.

(*b*) Mr. Walker, in his inquiries into the revival of the Eclogue has referred, on the authority of Dr. Johnson, to the Eclogues or Pastorals of *Petrarca*, and the Bucolics of *Batista Mantuanus;* to which he has added the Piscatory Eclogues of *Sanazaro*. It must however be remembered that these productions are all in Latin, and are closely formed on the model of the ancients. Bernardo Pulci translated into Italian the Eclogues of Virgil, which were printed in 1481; but I am not apprized of any original compositions in Italian to which

Shepherd Corydon, and the contest between Pan and Apollo; in which are instances not only of beautiful and lively imagery, but of great felicity and delicacy of expression, as may perhaps appear from the following lines, founded on a very common circumstance.

" L'altra mattina, in un mio picciol horto
Andavo, e'l sol surgente con suoi rai
Già appariva, non ch'io il vedessi scorto.
Sonvi piantati dentro alcun rosai,
A' quai rivolsi le mie vaghe ciglie
Per quel che visto non havevo mai.
Eranvi rose candide e vermiglie;
Alcuna à foglia à foglia al sol si spiega,
Stretta prima, poi par s'apra, et scompiglie.
Altra più giovinetta si dislega
A' pena dalla boccia; eravi ancora
Chi le sue chiuse foglie à l'aer niega.
Altra cadendo à pie il terreno infiora.
Cosi le vidi nascere e morire,
Et passar lor vaghezza in men d'un hora.
Quando languenti e pallide viddi ire
Le foglie à terra, allor mi venne a mente
Che vana cosa è il giovenil fiorire." (*a*)

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the title of Eclogues or Pastorals can be applied prior to those of Lorenzo de' Medici. The *Arcadia*, in prose and verse, of Sanazaro is a production of a later date.

(*a*) The following translation will give the reader but a very imperfect idea of the original:—

Without attempting to compare these pieces of Lorenzo with the more highly finished productions of modern times, it may be observed, that the unstudied simplicity and clearness of expression for which they are remarkable has itself a charm; and that the passages, *à foglia*

The other morn I took my round
Amidst my garden's sweet retreat,
What time the sunbeam touch'd the ground,
With its first soft reviving heat;
There on my favorite flowery bed
I cast my scarcely waken'd eye,
Where mingling roses, white and red,
In all the bloom of beauty vie.
Some leaf by leaf their filmy fold
I saw expanding to the sun;
First close compress'd, then half unroll'd,
Till all the tender task was done.
Some younger still, could scarcely burst
Their cruder buds; and some there were
That veiled their softer charms, nor durst
Intrust them to the early air.
And some had drank the morning sky,
And fell to earth a vernal shower;
And thus I saw them rise and die
In the brief limits of an hour.
And when, their faded glory past,
All strewn abroad they met my eyes,
A tender thought my mind o'ercast,
How youth departs, and beauty flies,

à foglia al sol si spiega;—altra più giovinetta si dislega àpena dalla boccia—cadendo à piè il terreno infiora, &c., may be considered as conveying true natural images in graceful and appropriate language.

Of a similar character is the following passage from the same eclogues, describing the music of the swan—

L'acqua riceve il canto, e poi risponde.

The streamlet hears the song—and then replies.

In which the expression, *e poi risponde*, so beautifully marks the pause that takes place between the sound and the echo, as to shew that it could only have suggested itself to an accurate observer of nature.

Of a character still more highly poetical are the *stanze*, or *ottave* of Lorenzo, intitled, *Selve d'amore*; of which some account is given in his life. (*a*) This piece exhibits a kind of poetical excursion, in which the author allows himself to expatiate upon every subject that can delight

(*a*) 4°. ed. vol. i. p. 278. 8°. ed. vol. i. 371.

his imagination, or exercise his powers. It is the flight of an eagle on a fine day, that rises into the air for no other purpose than to exercise his wings, to feel his strength, and to enjoy his own existence. Whatever is lively in description, whatever is affecting in passion, whatever is splendid in imagery, whatever is striking in contrast, or forcible in expression, are all combined to rouse, to delight, to elevate, to soothe, or to appal the reader; and although this style of poetical composition has been adopted by many succeeding writers, it may fairly be doubted whether the prototype of Lorenzo has even to this day been excelled.

Another striking instance of the versatile talents of this extraordinary man, may be found in his moral poem in *terza rima*, beginning, *Destati pigro ingegno, da quel sonno;* of which a specimen is given in his life,(*a*) but which deserves, as well from its intrinsic merit, as from the effects which it seems to have produced, more particular notice. This piece gives us a more perfect idea of the real seriousness of his character, and the depth of his judgment, than any other of his writings, and has led the way

(*a*) 4°. ed. vol. i. p. 282. 8°. ed. vol. i. p. 378.

to some other productions in the same style, which confer the highest honour on their authors. One of the pieces here referred to is the production of the Count Baldassare Castiglione, the friend of Raffaelle, and author of the *Libro del Cortigiano*, whose poetical productions, whether Latin or Italian, though few in number, are of the highest class; and whose beautiful canzone beginning, *Manca il fior giovenil de' miei prim' anni*, whilst it affects our feelings by the truth and vigour of its sentiments, and excites our admiration by its poetical imagery, strongly reminds us of the preceding poem of Lorenzo. Another piece, to which I have before alluded, is the production of Vincenzo Filicaja, indisputably the first lyric poet of modern times, intitled *Atto di Contrizione*; a poem which it is impossible to peruse without strongly participating in those devotional and penitential feelings by which it was undoubtedly inspired. In both these productions are many passages in which an imitation, or at least a coincidence, both of sentiment and expression, may be traced between them and the poem of Lorenzo; but the strongest resemblance consists in the tone and character of the whole composition, and in that forcible style of remonstrance, in which the mind turns inward upon herself, and, like a mariner in the last stage of danger, calls upon all her powers to exert

themselves at the ultimate moment allowed for escape. (*a*)

If it were necessary for me to resort to modern authorities, in order to shew that the writings of Lorenzo have not only set the first example in different styles of composition, but have maintained their rank amidst the rival productions of subsequent times, I might refer with confidence to one of the best critics who have illustrated the literary history of Italy, the late M. Ginguené, to whom I shall hereafter have occasion more fully to advert, but whose account of the *Nencia da Barberino*, a poem written by Lorenzo in *Lingua Contadinesca*, may here serve to confirm what I had before advanced respecting it in his life, and may be considered as a sufficient justification of the opinion which has given rise to the present discussion.

"The people of Tuscany have a dialect par-

(*a*) It is with pleasure I ennoble the present volume, and afford the Italian reader an opportunity of judging of the foregoing remarks, by inserting, amongst the documents at the close, these three fine specimens of the highest order of poetical composition; which in my opinion have not been excelled by those of any age, language, or country.—*v. Appendix, No.* XI.

ticularly adapted to the expression of simple ideas, intermixed with graceful imagery, and enlivened with a rustic gaiety. The relish, which Lorenzo de' Medici had for the country, induced him first to make use of this language, which he did with an equal degree of nature and spirit in his stanzas, intitled *La Nencia da Barberino*. He there introduces the rustic *Vallero* singing the praises of his mistress, *Nencia*, a peasant girl of the village of *Barberino*. Nothing can be more natural, more graceful, or more gay. This little poem *is the first instance of the kind*, which is denominated *rusticale*, or *contadinesco*. Luigi Pulci attempted to imitate it, in his *Beca da Dicomano*; but he has neither the same liveliness, nor the same grace. The only piece that can be compared to the Nencia is the *Lamento di Cecco da Varlungo* of Francesco Baldovini, which appeared in the seventeenth century; certainly an agreeable poem, but in which the rustic language is more exclusively employed, which is less tempered with usual forms of speech, more intermixed with proverbs and Florentine *riboboli*, or allusions, and which on this account is so obscure as not to be intelligible without a commentary; whilst, with a little attention, the *Nencia*, the charming *Nencia*, may be understood by all. We may perceive, in general, that in every kind of poetry, the genius of Lorenzo always at-

taches itself to whatever is clear and natural." (*a*)

Under the sanction of such an authority, I may safely submit it to the judgment of the public, whether Lorenzo de' Medici be not justly intitled to the rank which I have ventured to claim for him, as one of the chief restorers of the Italian tongue; and whether it may not be allowed me to state, without being

(*a*) "Les paysans et le peuple de Toscane ont un langage qui leur est particulier, et qui est singulièrement propre à exprimer des sentimens naïfs, mêlés d'images gracieuses et assaisonnés d'une gaîté rustique. Le goût de Laurent de Médicis pour les objets champêtres le porta à se servir le premier de ce langage, et c'est ce qu'il fit avec autant de naturel que d'esprit, dans les stances intitulées *la Nencia da Barberino.* Il y introduit le villageois *Vallero,* qui fait l'éloge de *Nencia* sa maîtresse, paysanne du village de *Barberino.* Rien de plus naïf, de plus gracieux, et de plus gai. Ce petit poëme est le premier modèle de ce genre, que l'on appelle *Rusticale,* ou *Contadinesco,* villageois. Louis *Pulci* voulut l'imiter dans sa *Beca da Dicomano;* mais il n'eut ni la même gaîté ni la même grâce. On ne peut comparer à la *Nencia* que les plaintes de *Cecco da Varlungo,* qui parurent dans le dernier siècle; poëme agréable sans doute, mais où le langage rustique est plus exclusivement employé, moins tempéré par la langue commune, melé de plus de proverbes et de *riboboli* toscans, et qui, par cette raison, est d'une obscurité qui exige des commentaires, tandis qu'avec un peu d'attention, la *Nencia,* la charmante *Nencia,* peut être entendue de tout le monde. On voit qu'en général et dans tous les genres, le génie de Laurent était toujours ami du naturel et de la clarté."

accused of hyperbole, that *in some departments*, at least, of poetic composition, his productions *stand unrivalled amongst those of his countrymen to the present day*. Mr. Pozzetti is not, however, the only critic of his country who has objected to the account given of the poetry of Lorenzo in the history of his life, as being in some respects too favourable; and as I shall find it necessary, in the course of these illustrations, to give a candid consideration to all the observations on this subject which have occurred to my notice, I shall beg leave to refer my reader to the discussions in the ensuing pages for a more detailed answer.

II.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 3. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 6.

"*Fiesolè retains few traces of its former importance; but its delightful situation and pure air still render it an agreeable and healthy residence.*"

The elevated situation of Fiesole is adverted to by Milton, in his beautiful comparison of the shield of Satan to the moon,

"——— whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening from the top of *Fesolé*."

III.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 7. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 10.

"*The superiority which the Florentines thus acquired was universally acknowledged, and they became the historians, the poets, the orators, and the preceptors of Europe.*"

When Boniface VIII. celebrated at Rome the plenary indulgence or jubilee in the year 1300, it appeared that *twelve* of the ambassadors from different states and sovereigns on that occasion were Florentines. To this circumstance many writers have alluded; but in a MS. in the library of the convent of *S. Croce* at Florence, containing several pieces of Petrarca, and written in the year 1313, the names of such ambassadors are particularly given, and appear to have been as under:

Muciatto Francezi, per il Re di Francia.

Ugolino Da Vicchio, per il Re d'Inghilterra.

Ranieri Langru, Miles solemnis de Florentia, per il Re di Boemia.

Vermiglio Alfani, per il Re di Germania.

SIMONE ROSSI, Magnus Miles de Florentia, Ambasciatore della Rascia.

BERNARDO ERUAJ, per M. Alberto della Scala Signore di Verona.

GUISCARDO DE BASTAI, per il gran Can de' Tartari.

MANNO FRONTE degli ADIMARI, per il Re Carlo di Napoli.

GUIDO TABANCA, per il Re Federigo di Sicilia.

LAPO FARINATA degl' UBERTI, per i Pisani.

CINO DI SER DIETISALVI, per M. Gherardo da Camerino.

BENCIVENNI FOLCHI, per il Maestro dello Spedale di San Giovanni Gerosolomitano.

On this singular event, the Pope is said to have asserted that the Florentines were *a fifth element of the world;* as appears from a very curious extract from the before-mentioned MS. given in the *Serie di Ritratti d'Uomini Illust. Toscani.* 4 *tom. fol. Flor.* 1766, where a representation of this historical fact is given as a frontispiece.

IV.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 8. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 12.

"*Giovanni de' Medici, in the year* 1251, *with a body of only one hundred Florentines forced his way through the Milanese army then besieging the fortress of Scarperia, and entered the place with the loss of twenty lives.*"

On this passage M. de Sismondi has thought proper to remark, that "I, like all biographers, have turned every thing to the advantage of my hero, and have antedated by a hundred years the first appearance of a Medici in the history of Florence; that the siege of Scarperia was in 1351, and not in 1251, as I have stated."(*a*) By whatever cause this error in point of date may have been occasioned, I had, by giving my au-

(*a*) "M. Roscoe, comme tous les biographes, tourne tous à l'avantage de son héros; il recule de cent ans la première apparition d'un *Medicis* dans l'Histoire Florentine. Ce fut au siege de Scarperia, en 1351, non pas 1251, comme il le rapport." *Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 6.

thority, afforded an opportunity of correcting it, and cannot therefore admit it as a proof that it was my intention to impose upon the reader. Had this been the case, I could have had no difficulty in referring the rise of the family to a much earlier period, and after discarding the equivocal authorities which trace it to the time of Charlemagne, might have stated with Galuzzi, that the family had risen to some degree of importance in the year 1168, at which time they had erected a fortress, and entered into a convention with some other powerful families; from which period the name occasionally occurs in the annals of Italy. I may also observe, that in the manuscript in the Riccardi Library at Florence, intitled, "*Origine e Descendenza della Casa Medici*," to which I have referred in the Life of Lorenzo, (*a*) it is stated, that about the year 1100, a Medici was "Lord of Petrone in *Mugello*, a fortified place since destroyed, and of which there only remains the church; the presentation of which, as well as that of *S. Pietro à Sieve* in Mugello, belonged to the family; of which memorials remain from that time to the year 1300."(*b*)

(*a*) 4°. ed. vol. i. p. 7. 8°. ed. vol. i. p. 11.

(*b*) "— Medico, circa all' anno 1100 fu Signore di Petrone Mugello; Castello in oggi distrutto; a vi è solo rimasto la

V.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 14. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 20.

"*In the year* 1433 *Rinaldo de' Albizi, at the head of a powerful party, carried the appointment of the magistracy.*"

It is observed by M. Sprengel, that the party at whose head was Albizi, were the Guelphs, who notwithstanding their opposition to the clergy, maintained a certain degree of popularity. "So much," says Macchiavelli, "did the citizens at that time prefer their country to their souls."(*a*)

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chiesa; la quale è di collazione della Casa di detto Sig. Bali Lorenzo Medici siccome anche e loro data la pieve di San Pietro a Sieve, posto nel medesimo Mugello, e se ne trovano memorie di detto date di tempo in tempo fino all anno 1300." Another copy of this MS., the author of which was Cosimo Baroncelli of Florence, is in the possession of the Canonico Moreni, who has given an account of it in his *Bibliografia Storico-Ragionata della Toscana, tom.* i. p. 87.

(*a*) "Tanto quei cittadini allora stimavano più la patria, che l'anima."—*Macchiavelli, lib.* iii.

VI.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 19. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 28.

"*Rinaldo with his adherents were compelled to leave the city.*"

On the return of Cosmo several persons were imprisoned, and five citizens suffered capital punishment; a circumstance which, in my brief notice of the life of Cosmo, I had omitted to state, and which has led M. Ginguené to remark, that "I have *suppressed*, like a Florentine and a friend of the Medici family, the severities exercised on this occasion." M. Ginguené has himself admitted that these severities were "'*not exercised by Cosmo but by his partizans.*"(*a*) In addition to which it is but

(*a*) "L'historien anglois de la Vie de Laurent de Medicis, M. Roscoe, dissimule, comme s'il étoit Florentin, et de l'ancien parti de cette famille, les rigueurs exercées en cette occasion, *non pas, il est vrai, par Cosme lui-même*, mais par ses partisans, pour sa cause, et pour ses intérêts personnels, *quoique au nom de la république.* Le dernier auteur Florentin de la vie de Cosme s'exprime à cet egard comme auroit pu faire un anglais, et comme le doit tout ami des hommes,

justice to the character of Cosmo to add, that so far from being the instigator of any severities against his opponents, it appears, that during the time he was Gonfaloniere (to which office he was elected soon after his return) no persons whatever were confined or personally injured; and that several of his adversaries who had been delivered over to the executive officers for capital punishment had by his means their sentence changed for perpetual imprisonment.(*a*) The authority which Cosmo from this time possessed, was founded on moderation rather than severity, and it was probably this circumstance that rendered it so permanent.

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de la justice, et de la vérité.—Voy. Ang. Fabroni Cosmi Medicei Vita, p. 49, 50, et 51. Surtout dans ce passage: *Horrere soleo cum reminiscor tot aut nobilitate aut gestis magistratibus claros viros, &c.*"—*Ginguené, Hist. Litteraire d'Italie, tom.* iii. *p.* 255, *&c.*

(*a*) v. *Life of Lor. de' Medici, Appendix, No.* II.

VII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 25. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 36, *note.*

"*This important dissertation* (Poggii Bracciolini, an seni sit uxor ducenda) *yet remains, though it has not hitherto been printed.*"

Since the foregoing was written, the above mentioned dissertation of Poggio has been for the first time printed, by the Rev. William Shepherd, author of the Life of Poggio Bracciolini; a work which not only illustrates the public and private character of that eminent scholar, but forms a necessary link in the chain of modern history, as well political as literary, and has been translated into the principal languages of the continent. This dissertation of Poggio, of which Mr. Shepherd printed only a few copies to be distributed amongst his friends, he has since reprinted, with a Latin dedication, addressed to the Rev. Dr. Parr.

VIII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 33. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 47.

"*Such was the high estimation in which these works were held, that a manuscript of the history of Livy, sent by Cosmo de' Medici to Alfonso king of Naples, with whom he was at variance, conciliated the breach between them; and although the king's physicians insinuated that the book was probably poisoned, Alfonso disregarded their suspicions, and began with great pleasure the perusal of the work.*"

The authority for this anecdote, which is not cited in the above work, is that of Petrus Crinitus, who wrote in the time of Lorenzo de' Medici; and who in his curious and valuable treatise, "*De honestâ Disciplinâ*," has given it with some additional circumstances and remarks, not noticed in the above quotation.

"It may not be unacceptable," says he, "to such as have improved themselves by literary studies, if we call to mind the examples of those

persons, who, whilst they were living, were held in high estimation by our more immediate predecessors; for some persons are so devoted to the great names of antiquity, that they contemn the talents and improvements effected in more modern times. Yet in the last generation there were some men of powerful minds and extraordinary ability, such as Alfonso king of Naples, Francesco Sforza, Othoman sovereign of the Turks, and Cosmo de Medici, of whom, as occasion has occurred, we have already given some account; but at present we shall mention the celebrated remark of Alfonso respecting the History of Livy. Some dissension having taken place between Cosmo de' Medici and Alfonso, Cosmo sent to the king as a present the Commentaries of Livy — a volume indeed most highly ornamented, and suitable for a sovereign who was known to be greatly devoted to the study of that author. The physicians of Alfonso being apprized of this circumstance, admonished the king to be on his guard against the subtilty of the Florentine, and that he should by no means handle a book sent by an enemy; that poison might be concealed in it, which might produce its effect in reading. To this remonstrance the king listened with great attention; but as soon as the book was produced, he began to inspect it, and in spite of

his physicians he opened it, he perused it, he turned the leaves, and, like a man of elevated mind, 'Leave off,' he exclaimed, 'your trifling, the mind of a king is not to be governed by the judgment of any private individual; it was well said by Homer, that a sovereign is always under the shield and the protection of Jove.'"(*a*)

(*a*) "Minus indignum fore putamus, neque improbandum ab iis qui paullò humaniores sunt, si et eorum exempla in literas referamus quibus majores nostri etiam vivèntibus plurimum concesserunt. Solent enim quidam sic in omnibus antiquitatum admirari ut ingenium resque gestas juniorum prorsus dispiciant. Sed ætate quidem superiori extiterunt viri aliquot magno animo, et egregiâ prudentiâ, cujusmodi habiti sunt Alfonsus Rex Neapolitanus, Francescus Sforza, Othomanus Turcorum princeps, et Cosmas Medices, de quibus si quando incidit nonnulla à nobis relata sunt. Sed illud celebre Alfonsi Regis de Livianâ historiâ, visum est quod hoc loco legeretur. Nam cum inter Cosmam Medicem maximæ auctoritatis virum et Alfonsum Regem suborta simultas crederetur, misit munere Alfonso Cosmas *T. Livii Commentarios, librum quidem, ut par est, quam ornatissimum;* quoniam Rex idem Livianæ Historiæ maxime fuit studiosus. Id autem cum medici Regis qui aderant intelligerent, statim Alfonso imperant ut cautum agat cum Florentino ingenio, neque ullo modo Livium attingat; librum illum ab hoste missum, in eoque venenum occultari posse, atque inter legendum contrahi. Quibus auditis Alfonsus attentior factus est, quasi assentire monentibus videretur. Sed ecce interim *Livianum opus* affertur; quod ubi Rex cœpit aspicere, nolentibus medicis, aperuit, legit, evolvit, simulque (ut homo summi spiritus) 'Ineptire,' in-

The incident here referred to probably occurred in the year 1449, when a negociation for peace was entered into between Alfonso and the state of Florence; on which occasion Gianozzo Manetti and Franco Sacchetti were sent as ambassadors to Naples; where Manetti, by his extraordinary talents and learning, acquired in such a degree the admiration and friendship of Alfonso, that he not only granted him in perpetuity a pension of nine hundred crowns, but invited him to continue at his court. (*a*) Two ambassadors were also dispatched by Alfonso to Florence, one of whom was the Latin poet, Antonio Beccatelli; who were received there with a degree of exultation almost unexampled. (*b*) As this was the only time that Cosmo de' Medici had occasion to pacify Alfonso, it may be presumed that Manetti was the bearer of the manuscript in question.

Amongst the splendid collection of manu-

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quit, 'desinite, nam Regis animus haud privati cujusquam regitur arbitrio, nec enim de nihilo dicebat Homerus, *sub Jovis clypeo ac patrocinio versari princeps.*'"

(*a*) *Tiraboschi Storia della Lett. Ital. tom.* vi. *par.* i. *p.* 35.

(*b*) *Ammirato Hist. Fior. tom.* iii. *p.* 64. *Fabroni Vita Magni Cosmi Med. p.* 114.

scripts in the library of Mr. Coke, at Holkham, is a magnificent copy of Livy on vellum, which has long been supposed to be the individual volume above referred to, as having been sent by Cosmo to Alfonso; but on this head some doubts have been thrown out by the learned Drakenborch in his edition of the works of Livy, in seven vols. 4to. who had an opportunity, through the liberality of the late Lord Leicester, of examining and collating it with other MSS. of the same author; and who, although he admits that the volume now at Holkham belonged to Alfonso, and that the annotations are in the king's hand-writing, is inclined, on the authority of Laurentius Valla, to conclude that this is not the copy sent by Cosmo, because the copy so sent exhibited the text or readings of Panhormita and others, the adversaries of Valla, as Valla has himself related; whereas the Holkham copy exhibits the readings of Valla, and not those of his rivals: to which Drakenborch adds, on the authority of Latino Latini that the manuscript which Cosmo sent to the king contained only the ten first books of Livy, whilst the present copy contains also the Macedonian and Asiatic wars. As I may probably ere long have an opportunity of adverting again to this subject in another work, I shall for the present only observe, that the circumstance of a copy of Livy having been sent by Cosmo to Alfonso,

is an historical fact; that the volume so sent was highly ornamented *(quam ornatissimum)* is asserted by Crinitus; that the present volume agrees with such description, and that it contains marginal remarks in the hand-writing of the king, is admitted by Drakenborch. Unless, therefore it could be supposed that the king had read and commented upon two different copies of Livy, of which no evidence whatever exists, we may still be allowed to doubt the authorities adduced by Drakenborch, and presume this to be the individual volume sent by Cosmo to conciliate the favour of Alfonso.

IX.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 60. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 83.

"*He* (Cosmo) *well knew the jealous temper of the Florentines, and preferred the real enjoyment of authority to that open assumption of it, which could only have been regarded as a perpetual insult by those whom he permitted to gratify their pride, in the reflection that they were the equals of Cosmo de' Medici.*"

Although Cosmo was only a private individual, and bore no title of honour amongst his fellow-citizens, yet there is reason to believe

that precedence was conceded to him on public occasions, and that he was generally attended by persons of rank and importance in the affairs of government. In a picture by Francesco Peselli, now in the Liverpool Royal Institution, representing the exhibition of a relic in the great church at Florence, is the portrait of Cosmo in the costume of the time, accompanied by his son Piero, and preceded by his grandsons Lorenzo and Giuliano. They are represented as entering the church, followed by a numerous train of relatives and dependants. The resemblances of the Medici are extremely characteristic, and the infirmities of Piero are strikingly apparent. Lorenzo appears to be about twelve years of age, from which it may be inferred that this picture was painted about the year 1454, or about three years before the death of the painter, who died in 1457. Peselli had been greatly favoured by Cosmo, and had been employed by him to ornament his palace with battles of lions, and other animals, *giostra* of horses, &c., which remained in the time of Vasari, and which he commends as full of character and spirit. (*a*)

(*a*) " E' lavorò (Peselli) in casa de' Medici una spalliera d' animali molto bella, ed alcuni corpi di cassoni con storiette piccole di giostra di cavalli. E veggonsi in detta casa fino al di d'oggi di mano sua alcuna tele di leoni, i quali s'affac-

Cosmo de' Medici with his Son Piero & his Grandsons, Lorenzo and Giuliano, from a picture of Francesco Pesellí, in the Liverpool Royal Institution.

X.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 70. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 96.

"*The disposition of Lorenzo, which afterwards gave him a peculiar claim to the title of* MAGNIFICENT, *was apparent in his childhood.*"

SISMONDI asserts that "the name of *Magnificent* was only given to Lorenzo in common with those princes who had no other title;" although he is compelled to admit that "he merited a title, of which an error has put him in possession."(*a*) This is not however the fact.

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ciano, a una grata che paiono vivissimi, ed altri ne fece fuori; e similmente uno, che con un serpente combatte; e colorì in un altra tela un bue ed una volpe, con altri animali molto pronti e vivaci."—*Vasari vol.* i. *p.* 369, *Ed. Rom.* 1759.

(*a*) "Laurent, que la postérité a décoré du nom de *Magnifique*, tandis que ses concitoyens et les écrivains de son temps ne lui donnoient cette épithète que comme un titre d'honneur commun à tous les princes qui n'en avoient pas d'autre, à tous les condottieri et à tous les ambassadeurs; Laurent méritoit le surnom dont *une erreur l'a mis en possession.*"—*Sism. Rep. Ital. tom.* ix. *p.* 187.

The name of *Magnificent* was applied to Lorenzo by his countrymen in a peculiar manner, as expressive of his disposition and character. If any doubt could be entertained of this, the authority of Monsig. Fabroni, a Florentine, and principal of the university of Pisa, is decisive. "Even in his childhood," says he, "Lorenzo appears to have laid the foundation of his glory and his fame, by which he obtained the appellation of *the Magnificent;* for he displayed great liberality towards all, and particularly towards the poor, so that nothing affected him more than the miseries of others, and he thought nothing more distressing than depressed and afflicted worth."(*a*) And again, adverting to the prize obtained by Lorenzo in the tournament, he observes, that "Lorenzo rejoiced in that event, and even when a youth, received the appellations of *Magnificent* and of *Magnanimous* by universal assent." (*b*)

(*a*) "Fundamenta vel in pueritiâ jecisse videtur ejus laudis et gloriæ, ob quas ei *Magnifici* nomen inditum fuit. Nam mirâ erat liberalitate in omnes, ac præsertim in pauperes, sicque dolenter accipiebat humanarum miseriarum casus, ut nihil luctuosius putaret, afflictâ et prostratâ virtute."—*Fabr. Vita Laur. p.* 4.

(*b*) "Præmium vero se consecutum esse amplissimum suæ

To the same effect is the testimony of Pignotti, who thus terminates his observations on the character of Lorenzo. "We may conclude that Lorenzo is the brightest ornament of the family of the Medici, and that the title of *Magnificent*, which was given him on account of the grandeur and magnificence which he displayed in all his actions, was the least eulogium which he merited." (*a*)

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liberalitatis Laurentius gavisus est, quod adolescens et *Magnifici* et *Magnanimi* cognomen omnium consensu obtinuit."—*Fabr. Vita Laur. p.* 6.

(*a*) "Si può concludere che Lorenzo è il più chiaro ornamento della famiglia Medicea, e il titolo di *Magnifico*, che gli fu dato per la grandezza e magnificenza che poneva in tutte le sue azioni, è il più picciolo elogio che egli meritasse."—*Pignotti Storia della Toscana, tom.* vi. *p.* 263.

XI.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 86, *note.* 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 119, *note.*

"*Pozzetti, somewhat unfortunately, denominates this contest 'the Triumph of Literature.'*"

I AM sorry to perceive that this passage has given some dissatisfaction to the learned professor, who in the first of his two dissertations contends that the above expression was not applied by him to the *result,* but to the *motive* and *object* of this literary contest, which was intended to provide a rational amusement for the people after being harassed with a tedious warfare. His words are "*Fu questo il maggior Trionfo per le lettere, che si videro chiamate a bella posta per concorrere al sollievo del pubblico.*" I admit that the passage will bear the meaning for which he contends; but as it is not usual to apply the term of a triumph to that which is not ultimately successful, I cannot consider my own remark as totally unwarranted. To the candid and conciliatory obser-

vations with which the professor concludes his statement, I fully assent.(*a*)

XII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 89. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 122.

"*Will long continue to do honour to his memory.*"

Professor Pozzetti has availed himself of the opportunity afforded him by the publication of his dissertations on the English Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, to add some further particulars to his Memoirs of Leo Battista Alberti, which are deserving of notice, but would lead us too far beyond our limits to enter upon them here. He has also referred to a medallion of Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, lord of Ri-

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(*a*) "Converremo tutti col Sig. Roscoe, che la diffinitiva sentenza intorno la collazione del premio ridondò effettivamente in ischerno degli aspiranti; nè potè dunque simile spettacolo appellarsi in genere, *il Trionfo della Letteratura*; ma egli, confido, si degnerà concedermi altresì, che l'oggetto pel quale venne proposta la tenzone, illustra assaissimo le lettere giudicate valevoli di concorrere *al sollievo del Pubblico*. Tale appunto, e solo, fu il pensiero che manifestai nelle riferite parole."—*Pozz. Diss.* I. *p.* 5.

mini, executed in 1450, on the reverse of which is represented the church of S. Francesco, at Rimini; and has published a letter of Alberti, in order to shew that he intended to terminate that building, of which he was the architect, with a cupola like that of Brunelleschi at Florence, although such intention was not carried into effect. Below is a copy of the medallion referred to, from an original in my possession.

XIII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 117. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 158.

"*That the heart of Lorenzo had little share in this engagement, is marked by a striking circumstance. In adverting to his marriage in his Ricordi, he bluntly remarks, that he took this lady to wife, or rather, says he, she was given to me on the day before mentioned.*"

THE Italian translator, Mecherini, has in a note objected to my construction of the above passage, which he says, only implies, in good Tuscan phraseology, *a promise of future espousal;* and affords no ground to suppose that there was any dissatisfaction on the part of Lorenzo.(*a*) I by no means feel disposed to press my opinion against that of a well-informed native, who must be so much more competent to judge on the subject; yet in justice to myself

(*a*) "Da questa espressione, che non altro significa in buon Toscano se non che una promessa di futuri sponsali, non può trarsi congettura d'alienazione di Lorenzo da questo matrimonio."—*Vita di Lor. trad. di Mecherini,* i. 121.

I cannot omit to notice the remark of Pignotti, who in reference to this passage in the Italian translation, seems to admit of my construction, observing that "it is difficult to perceive how *the translator* could pervert the sense by an unnecessary note."(*a*)

XIV.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 129. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 174.

"*On the second day after that event he was attended at his own house by many of the principal inhabitants of Florence, who requested that he would take upon himself the administration and care of the republic, in the same manner as his grandfather and father had before done.*"

M. DE' SISMONDI(*b*) has preferred the authority of Macchiavelli and his copyists, to that of Lorenzo himself in his *Ricordi*, who expressly attributes his elevation to the direction, or, as he expresses it, the *care* of the republic, to the intervention of the chief persons of the state,

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(*a*) "Non si sa come il *Traduttore* possa storcere il senso con una inopportuna nota."—*Pignotti Storia di Toscana, tom.* ix. *p.* 166.

(*b*) *Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 5.

two days after the death of his father. (*a*) Whether the authority of this domestic, private, and contemporary record, is not to be preferred to that of a writer, who, to say nothing of his occasional inaccuracy, was only born in the year in which the event took place, the reader will judge.

On this head I must not omit to notice an observation in the excellent work of Mr. Hallam, which is important to this point. In relating the succession of Lorenzo and Giuliano to the rank and authority of the family, which he expresses somewhat too strongly by their *assuming the reins of government*, he observes that Lorenzo had asserted in excuse for himself, that "*it was not easy to live at Florence without governing it;*" (*b*) "which," he adds, "was true enough, and his ancestors had been in a good degree the cause of it." (*c*) This undoubtedly would be very decisive evidence, if such were in fact the sense of the passage; but I apprehend that the expression *senza lo stato*,

(*a*) *v. Ricordi di Lor. in Life of Lor. de' Medici, Appendix, No.* XII.

(*b*) "A Firenze si può mal vivere senza lo stato."—*Ricordi di Lorenzo, ut sup.*

(*c*) *Hallam's View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, 4° ed. vol. i. 384. 8°. ed. vol. i. p. 541.

taken with the context, has a reference only to the general support of the government in its popular form, in opposition to those who were always on the watch to overturn it; as if he had said, *there is no living in Florence unless we maintain things in their present state;* nor can it for a moment be supposed that Lorenzo could have used it in any other sense.

XV.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 131. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 176.

"*At the death of his father, Giuliano was only about sixteen years of age; so that the administration of public affairs rested wholly on Lorenzo, whose constant attention to the improvement of his brother may be considered as the most unequivocal proof of his affection.*"

On the authority of Joh. Mic. Brutus, a writer of the sixteenth century, M. de Sismondi has informed us that the two brothers did not perfectly agree in their system of administration; Giuliano being of a mild and conciliatory disposition, and having felt himself disquieted by the impatience, the pride, and the violence of his brother. (*a*) To the evidence of this Vene-

(*a*) "Laurent de Medicis et son frère Julien, n'étoient pas

tian writer of a later period, who is remarkable only for his inaccuracy and his animosity to the Medici, M. de Sismondi has added that of Alfieri, in his *Congiura de' Pazzi*, where the author has availed himself of this supposed disagreement in order to heighten the dramatic effect. (*a*) This unjust imputation on the character of Lorenzo is contradicted by the uniform testimony of both contemporary and recent writers; and in particular by Politiano, who has referred to the affection which uniformly subsisted between the two brothers in various parts of his work, some of which are cited in the Life of Lorenzo. (*b*) The same subject is also adverted to by him in one of his Latin epigrams also cited in that work, of which the following is offered as a humble translation:

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complètement d'accord dans leur système d'administration. Le second plus doux, plus modeste, plus disposé à vivre en égal au milieu des ses concitoyens, ressentoit quelque inquiétude de la fougue, de l'orgueil, et des violences de son frère." —*Sism. Hist. des Rep. Ital.* xi. *p.* 82.

(*a*) *J. Michel Bruto. Hist. Florent. l.* vi. *p.* 143. "Alfieri a tiré parti de cette opposition de caractère dans sa Tragédie de *la Congiura de' Pazzi*."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. ut supra.*

(*b*) 4°. ed. vol. i. p. 132. 8°. ed. vol. i. p. 177.

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Not closer bonds the Œbalian brothers prov'd,
Nor Atreus' offspring more each other lov'd,
Than Medici's young pair confess the tie
Of strong affection, pure fidelity.
Alike in what to will, with what to part,
To take and give in interchange the heart.
LORENZO, JULIAN, may I not with truth
Proclaim one spirit animates you both?

This circumstance is also frequently referred to by Fabroni in his Latin Life of Lorenzo; where he assures us that Giuliano was not only a great favourite with the populace, but was beloved by Lorenzo, towards whom he always displayed the greatest respect and affection. (*a*)

(*a*) "Ob hæc et alia merita princeps juventutis et habebatur et erat (Julianus), nec diligebatur solum, sed etiam amabatur a fratre, cui singularem observantiam atque pietatem semper præstitit."—*Fabr. in Vita Laur. p. 75.*

XVI.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 198. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 265.

"*The public grief occasioned by the death of Giuliano was, however, mingled with and alleviated by exultation for the safety of Lorenzo.*"

In opposition to the concurrent opinion of historians, M. de Sismondi has ventured to extenuate, and even to justify the atrocious conspiracy against the two brothers of the Medici, formed with the privity and encouragement of the supreme pontiff Sixtus IV., and perpetrated in the metropolitan church of Florence, during the celebration of divine service, and at the moment of the elevation of the host. The grounds upon which M. de Sismondi has attempted to vindicate this horrible transaction are of two kinds, one of a public, the other of a private nature. With respect to the first, M. de Sismondi relates that Cosmo de' Medici, being desirous of attaching to the interests of his house the rich and numerous family of the Pazzi, had given his grand-daughter Bianca, the sister of Lorenzo, to Guglielmo de' Pazzi. He then

adds, " The policy of Lorenzo was entirely the reverse. His principle was to effect the ruin of the Pazzi, or at least to impede the progress of their fortune; and as Giovanni de' Pazzi, the brother-in-law of his sister, had married the only daughter and heiress of Giovanni Borromei, a citizen of immense wealth, *Lorenzo procured the passing of a law* on the death of Borromei, by which the nephews in the male line were preferred to the daughters in the inheritance of a person dying intestate; and to this law he gave a retrospective effect, so that Pazzi lost the property of his father-in-law, who had not thought it necessary to make a will in favour of his only child." (*a*)

(*a*) " Cosme de Médicis avoit voulu s'attacher, par les liens du sang, cette famille si nombreuse, si riche, et dont le crédit pouvoit être pour lui si utile ou si dangereux. Il avoit fait épouser sa petite fille, Blanche, sœur de Laurent et de Julien, à Guillaume des Pazzi, fils d'Antoine et petit-fils d'André. Laurent avoit eu une politique toute contraire; il avoit pour principe de les ruiner, ou tout au moins d'arrêter l'accroissement de leur fortune; et comme Jean des Pazzi, beau-frère de sa sœur, avoit épousé la fille et l'unique heritière de Jean Borromei, citoyen immensement riche, Laurent fit rendre une loi, à la mort de Borromei, par laquelle les neveux du sex masculin étoient préférés aux filles, dans l'heritage d'un père mort *ab intestat*, et il donna à cette loi un effet rétroactif; en sorte que Pazzi perdit l'heritage de son beau-père, qui n'avoit pas cru nécessaire de faire un testament en faveur de son unique enfant."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 84.

The only authorities alleged by M. de Sismondi for the truth of this story are Scipio Ammirato, and J. M. Brutus; neither of whom wrote till nearly a century after the event took place. But so far is Ammirato from justifying the Pazzi, that he refers to this circumstance merely as a pretext, amongst many others, which served to exasperate the malevolent disposition of Francesco de' Pazzi, the chief of that family, against the Medici, (*a*) briefly representing it as "a decision given against his brother Giovanni, on account of an inheritance which belonged to his wife." (*b*) With respect to the authority of J. M. Brutus, the following character given of him as an historian by M. de Sismondi himself, at the close of his eleventh volume, may serve to shew with what propriety he has quoted him in almost every instance where the conduct of Lorenzo is commented upon. "Bruto," says he, "is placed in the

(*a*) "Ma perché alla malvagia dispozione non mancassero degli ajuti, accaddero in diversi tempi varj accidenti, che l'animo di Francesco alla rovina e morte de' Medici maravigliosamente infiammarono," &c.—*Amm. Hist. Fior.*

(*b*) "Un giudizio dato contra Giovanni suo fratello, per cagione d'una heredità che appartenava alla sua moglie."—*Amm. Hist. Fior.*

first rank of the Latin historians of the sixteenth century, but it is only on account of the elegance of his language. He had resided at Lyons, amongst the Florentine emigrants, the enemies of the house of Medici, and he has adopted in general their sentiments and their hatred. He has however added few facts to what were before known. His authorities are Macchiavelli, the Commentaries on the Letters of the Cardinal of Pavia, and the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici by Nicolo Valori. He discusses their opinions, he selects from amongst them with little criticism, and the long discourses with which he has interspersed his narrative are amplifications of those of Macchiavelli, which he has deprived of their original colouring."

(*a*) "On met Bruto dans les premiers rangs parmi les historiens latins du seizième siècle; mais c'est uniquement à cause de l'élégance de son langage. Il avoit vécut à Lyon parmi les émigrés Florentins, ennemis de la maison de Médicis, et il adopte en général leurs sentimens et leur haine; cependant il ajoute tres peu dès faits à ceux que nous connoissons déjà. Ses autorités sont *Machiavel, les commentaires et les lettres du Cardinal de Pavie*, et *la vie de Laurent de Médicis par Nicolas Valori.* Il discute leurs opinions, et choisoit entre elles avec peu de critique; et les longs discours dont il a parsemé sa narration sont des amplifications de ceux de Machiavel, auquels il a fait perdre leur couleur originale."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 572.

To this story of the enmity of Lorenzo to his brother-in-law, Guglielmo de' Pazzi, which is assigned to no reasonable cause, and which, in other respects, carries on the face of it the strongest marks of improbability, I had also adverted in my work; but in order to shew, that whatever the nature of the transaction might be, it could not be alleged as a cause of offence from Lorenzo to the Pazzi, I had produced an original and contemporary document, in a letter from Luigi Pulci, the celebrated author of the *Morgante*, to Lorenzo, (*a*) from which it appears, as I have contended, that at the time when this dispute respecting the inheritance of the Borromei took place, Piero de' Medici, the father of Lorenzo, was still living; that Lorenzo was only seventeen years of age, and that he was then absent on an excursion through other parts of Italy. This letter, written in the peculiar style of Pulci, M. de Sismondi affects to discredit, professing that he does not understand these pleasantries, and that he doubts whether I understand them better than himself. (*b*) Whatever may be the

(*a*) *v. Appendix to the Life of Lor. de' Medici, No.* IX.

(*b*) "Je ne comprends pas trop ces plaisanteries en langage barroque, mais je doute que M. Roscoe les comprenne mieux que moi."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 85.

pleasantry of the letter, it is not difficult to perceive that it relates to a transaction in which some person had been accused of endeavouring to obtain an undue advantage in the family of Borromei, intimated by his having attempted to enter the garden of Borromei over the wall; and that this transaction took place in the year 1465, whilst Lorenzo was absent from Florence; on which fortunate circumstance, "*questa tua felicissima partenza,*" he is congratulated by Pulci. Now unless it can be shewn that this letter relates to some other transaction, in which the families of the Pazzi and Borromei were concerned, (for under the name of *L'amico di Val d'Arno* some one of the family of the Pazzi, which had possessions in that district, is evidently alluded to,) I must still continue to think that this document is sufficient to vindicate Lorenzo from an imputation which, in other respects, is so inconsistent with his character, and the general tenor of his conduct. As to those parts of the letter of Pulci that seem to have exercised the ingenuity of M. de Sismondi, I presume he will find them as intelligible as the *Poesie di Burchiello*, or the *Sonetti giocosi e da ridere* of the same Luigi Pulci and his friend Matteo Franco, to the study of which I beg leave to recommend him.

But whatever the nature of this transaction

might have been, and however it may be considered as a cause of the hatred of the Pazzi against the Medici, it can scarcely be supposed, even by M. de Sismondi himself, to be a sufficient justification of one of the most base and treacherous attempts that have ever disgraced the annals of society; and accordingly he has had recourse to allegations of a more public nature, and to injuries said to have been received by the citizens of Florence from the brothers of the Medici, who, according to his statement, "were no longer amenable to the laws, and any attempt against their authority could only be productive of new victims."(*a*) "There remained therefore," says he, "no resource but a conspiracy; for it was very certain, that after the brothers of the Medici were killed, the citizens, who trembled before them, would be eager to condemn their memory, and to acknowledge, as an act of public vengeance, the conduct of their murderers."(*b*) How far this

(*a*) "Les Medicis n'étoient plus soumis aux lois, n'étoient plus justiciables d'aucuns tribunaux, et tous recours contre eux n'auroit servi qu'à leur designer de nouvelles victimes."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 88.

(*b*) "Il ne restoit donc d'autre parti à prendre que celui d'un conjuration; car on étoit bien sur qu'après que les deux Medici auroient été tués, les citoyens qui trembloient devant

conjecture of M. de Sismondi, as to the temper of the Florentines, is founded in fact will appear from the consequences. The conspirators disregarded the bonds of society; they broke the ties of affinity; and they gave the citizens of Florence an opportunity of evincing their sentiments, if they conceived that they were oppressed by a tyrannical yoke. The attempt was accordingly made, and partially succeeded; one of the brothers fell a victim; a public commotion took place; the citizens were excited by cries in the streets and by every possible means to take up arms against the Medici, and a military force was at hand to assist them in the recovery of their liberties. But what was the result? An universal rising up of all ranks, from the magistrates to the lowest of the populace, in favour of the surviving brother, with a spirit of retaliation against the perpetrators of the crime, which was certainly carried to a most severe and sanguinary extreme, and was only at length repressed by the interference of Lorenzo himself. "The people," says M. de Sismondi, "were furious in seeking out all those who had shewn any opposition to the ambition of the Medici, or any connexion or friendship

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eux s'empresseroient de condamner leur mémoire, et de reconnoître, comme un acte de vengeance publique, l'attentat de leurs meurtriers."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 88.

with the conspirators. No sooner were such persons discovered than they cut them in pieces and dragged their carcases through the streets. Their mangled limbs were carried on lances through the different quarters of the city; and this frantic thirst of vengeance seemed as if it was never to have an end."(*a*) After this account given by M. de Sismondi himself of the result of the conspiracy and the temper and character of the people, I trust I may leave it without further comment to the judgment and impartiality of the reader to decide, how far M. de Sismondi is justified in asserting that Lorenzo de' Medici had incurred the hatred of his fellow-citizens, or in accusing his biographer of having misled his readers, and suppressed the truth, in laying before them a narrative which M. de Sismondi has himself been compelled in every particular to confirm.

It is surprising that M. de Sismondi, who

(*a*) "Le peuple furieux, étoit de son côté, à la recherche de tous ceux qui avoient montré quelque opposition à l'ambition des Medici, ou quelque liaison d'amitié avec les conjurés. Dès qu'ils étoient dénoncés, ils les mettoit en pièces et traînoit leurs cadavres par les rues; leurs membres déchirés étoient portés sur des lances dans les divers quartiers de la ville, et cette soif frénétique de vengeance sembloit ne pouvoir jamais s'assouvir."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 102.

appears from different parts of his work to be a strenuous and successful defender of popular rights, should have been so greatly influenced by his hatred to the Medici as not to have perceived, that the conspiracy of the Pazzi was an attempt of the aristocratic party in Florence, by the aid of their partizans within the city, and of despotic princes and hirelings without, to overturn the popular government of the place. The family of Pazzi had long ranked amongst the chief nobility of Florence, and were consequently, by the laws of the state, excluded from holding any office, or exercising any authority in the government; and although Andrea de' Pazzi, the chief of the family, had in the time of Cosmo availed himself of the opportunity allowed by the laws, of associating himself with the class of artizans, yet the ancient family spirit appears to have animated his descendants, who, in case they had succeeded, undoubtedly intended to have suppressed the liberties of the city, and to have restored that despotic government of the nobility, under which she had formerly groaned. Of this a sufficient proof is afforded, by the attempt having been so strongly supported by the Pope; who, as a despotic sovereign, detested a government formed on the broadest basis of public liberty, and who found himself continually

counteracted in his designs by a set of plebeians who considered the Medici as of their own number, and as a family who, without aspiring to a despotic authority, had invariably adhered to their cause, and defended their rights.

Of the motives and designs of Sixtus IV. M. de Sismondi gives the most favourable account, contending that he had conceived noble projects for the establishment of republics in Italy, in order that she might be able to defend herself against the attacks of foreigners and barbarians, and that his views were those of a man of genius, and of a true friend to his country, although he admits that the means to which he resorted, and the instruments he employed, dishonoured his plans. (*a*) If M. de Sismondi

(*a*) "Sixte IV. avoit peut-être de grandes pensées et de nobles projets pour l'indépendance de l'Italie; sans apprécier la liberté, il connoissoit la puissance des républiques; il vouloit assurer à la péninsule tous les moyens de repousser les attaques des étrangers et des barbares, en réunissant la Lombardie à la Toscane, sous l'égide de gouvernemens que la confiance et l'amour des peuples rendissent inébranlables. Le plan qu'il avoit conçu dans sa tête, et que nous verrons se développer, étoit digne d'un homme de génie, et même d'un ami vrai de son pays; mais le caractère du pape corrompoit son esprit, et mêloit de la fausseté et de la perfidie à ses vastes conceptions. Incapable de distinguer la vertu d'avec le crime, tous les moyens d'exécution lui étoient indifférens, et il dés-

can really believe that the dark and sanguinary assassin can be combined in the same character with the enlightened friend and promoter of public liberty, his credulity far exceeds all reasonable bounds. — Whoever wishes to see the mask torn from this hypocritical and tyrannical pontiff, and his character shewn in its true light may peruse the authentic examinations and justificatory pieces of the Florentines given in the appendix to the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici.(*a*)

M. de Sismondi is not however satisfied with expressing his decided approbation of the conduct of the Florentine conspirators in the particular instance of the Pazzi. In his introduction to his account of some other attempts of the same kind which occurred at Ferrara, Milan, and other places, he says, "the most noble and generous nation may not always be able to free themselves from their tyrant by open force. No other resource but a conspiracy remains then for the patriot, who, by his weak personal efforts may enter into competition with the man who disposes of the police, the army, and the revenue. Many people ac-

honoroit ses projets par les instrumens dont il faisoit choix pour es accomplir."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 116.

(*a*) Nos. XXIII. and No. XXVII.

tuated by a noble repugnance, avoid such enterprizes, because they think there is some appearance of dissimulation and of treason. They do not perceive that the extreme danger incurred ennobles the basest measures, and that the assassin of a tyrant requires more courage than the grenadier who carries a battery by the bayonet."(*a*) Still more openly are the opinions of this writer expressed in his remarks on the failure of the conspiracy of the Pazzi: "The conduct of a conspiracy," says he, "demands a certain degree of dissimulation, and even of falsehood. The persons against whom such attacks are directed complain, often with bitterness, of the perfidy of those whom they had regarded as their friends. They forget their own offences, because those who have avenged themselves did not manifest their resentment; and

(*a*) "En sorte que la nation la plus noble et la plus généreuse n'est pas assez forte pour se défaire à force ouverte de son tyran. La seule ressource des conjurations demeure au patriote, qui, avec ses foibles moyens personnels, veut entrer en lutte avec l'homme qui dispose de la police, de l'armée, et du trésor. Plusieurs, cédant à une noble répugnance, s'écartent de ces entreprises, parce qu'ils y voient quelqu'apparence de dissimulation et de trahison; ils ne reconnoissent pas que l'extrême danger anoblit les moyens les moins relevés, et que l'assassin d'un tyran doit avoir plus de bravoure que le grenadier qui enlève une batterie à la bayonnette."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 45, 46.

they conceive they should have been attacked openly, and with equal forces, whilst they are themselves shut up in their fortresses, surrounded by their guards, or arm a whole people to defend them. But in order that the reproach of dissimulation should not stain the reputation of the conspirators, it is requisite the attempt should be justified by an imminent and personal danger. If those who can direct their attacks from a place of safety, who can carry on war with the arms of princes, have recourse to the poniard of the assassin, they *alone* deserve the opprobrium that is attached to treason. The Pazzi and the Salviati may appear great and worthy of respect, even when they allay the suspicions of the Medici by false caresses; and when embracing them, as a mark of friendship, they endeavour to discover whether these devoted victims carry armour under their dress." (*a*)

(*a*) "La conduite d'une conspiration demande toujours un certain degré de dissimulation, et même de fausseté; les hommes contre lesquels de pareilles attaques sont dirigées, se plaignent souvent avec amertume de la perfidie de ceux qu'ils avoient regardés comme leurs amis; ils oublient leurs propres offenses, parceque ceux qui s'en sont vengés n'en témoignoient point de ressentiment, et ils demandent qu'on les attaque à visage découvert et à armes égales, tandis qu'eux-mêmes s'enferment dans des forteresses, qu'ils s'entourent de

If these passages and others of a similar nature had not been interspersed in different parts of M. de Sismondi's work, it would scarcely have been believed that a writer who has in many respects so just a claim to the esteem and admiration of his readers, should at the commencement of the nineteenth century have disseminated opinions, the direct tendency of which is to dissolve all the bonds of society, and to render government a continued struggle between the severest tyranny on the one hand — the deepest treachery on the other.

It is true M. de Sismondi has at the close of his remarks condemned the conduct of Sixtus IV. who consecrated the arms of the conspirators, and of Ferdinand of Naples, who sent an army for their support. " This sovereign pon-

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gardes, et qu'ils arment tout un peuple pour se défendre. Mais pour que le reproche de dissimulation n'entache pas la réputation des conspirateurs, il faut qu'un danger éminent, un danger personnel les justifie. Ceux qui dirigent leurs coups d'un lieu de sûreté, qui pouvant combattre avec les armes des princes, ont recours au poignard des assassins, méritent seuls l'opprobre qui doit retomber sur la trahison. Les Pazzi et les Salviati peuvent paroître grands et dignes de respect, lors même qu'ils endorment les Médicis par de fausses caresses, et que les serrant dans leurs bras en signe d'amitié, ils cherchent sous leurs habits si ces victimes dévouées portent une cuirasse."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 114.

tiff," says he, "and this monarch, who themselves endangered the legislation under which they lived, merit no higher esteem than those cowards who employ mercenary murderers to gratify their vengeance. Whenever recourse can be had to a public vindication, private vindication is prohibited. The avengers of individuals are the tribunals—the tribunal of sovereigns is war;"(a) but the distinction thus attempted to be made between the prince and the people, as to the right of resorting to conspiracy and assassination for the promotion of their views, is futile. If we once admit the principle, the application of it will be made by every person according to his own judgment and the circumstances in which he is placed; and to attempt to lay down rules for the exercise of that which is unjustifiable in every point of view, and by whomsoever it is resorted to, is to

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(a) "Mais Sixte IV., qui bénit les armes des conspirateurs, et Ferdinand de Naples, qui fait avancer son armée pour les seconder; ce souverain pontife et ce monarque qui ébranlent eux-mêmes la législation sous la protection de laquelle ils vivent, ne méritent pas plus d'estime qui les lâches qui payent des meurtriers mercenaires pour satisfaire leur vengeance. Toutes les fois que le recours à la vindicte publique est possible, la vindicte privée est interdite. Les vengeurs des particuliers sont les tribunaux, le tribunal des souverains c'est la guerre."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 115.

sanction a crime which ought to be marked with universal detestation. Nor are such sentiments more objectionable in a moral than in a political and prudential point of view. Such is almost invariably the reaction occasioned in the popular opinion by the natural detestation of treachery and assassination, that it casts an odium no less upon the cause intended to be supported by it, than on the party that stoops to have recourse to it; and M. de Sismondi has himself recorded, that of five conspiracies which occurred in Italy within the space of three years, in which neither secrecy, fidelity, nor courage, were wanting, and the parties had accomplished their intended object, they failed in reaping the fruit of their treachery, and the people returned under the same yoke by which they had before been oppressed. (*a*)

After the conspiracy of the Pazzi, and in

(*a*) Of these conspiracies, one took place at Ferrara, two at Genoa, one at Milan, and one at Florence. "Il sembloit que les peuples, las enfin de l'oppression sous laquelle ils avoient gémi, étoient partout déterminés à briser un indigne joug; et partout cependant ils retombèrent sous la chaîne qui les avoit accablés. Ce ne furent ni le secret, ni la fidélité, ni la hardiesse que manquèrent aux conspirateurs; tous parvinrent à exécuter ce qu'ils avoient projeté; aucun n'en recueillit le fruit."—*Hist des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 44.

order to commemorate the clemency of Lorenzo de' Medici towards his enemies on that occasion, a medal was struck, of which a copy is here given from an original specimen.

XVII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 217. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 292.

"*The other division of the Florentine troops was not equally successful.*"

M. DE SISMONDI has thought proper to express his surprise that Lorenzo de' Medici did not accompany the army in person on this occasion.(*a*) If M. de Sismondi had not suffered himself to be misled by his prejudices, he would have perceived that in the situation in which Lorenzo stood, in which it was requisite not only to preserve the attachment, and secure the support of his fellow citizens, but at the same time to carry on important negociations with foreign states, nothing could have been more impolitic than to have quitted his proper scene of action to pass his time in the long delays of military operations; which he had the good sense to confide to others more conversant with them

(*a*) "On ne peut se defendre de quelque surprise en voyant que Laurent de Medicis ne parut point dans le camp Florentin, pendant le cours d'une guerre où sa patrie n'étoit engagée que pour lui," &c.—*Hist. des Rep. cap.* 56. *vol.* ii. *p.* 121.

than himself. M. de Sismondi has sufficiently answered his own observation, in relating that at this precise period, Lorenzo called together a council of three hundred of his fellow-citizens, and expressly stated to them his willingness to submit to exile, to prison, or even to death, provided it might relieve them from the dangers with which they were threatened; to which *generous proposition*, as M. de Sismondi is compelled to call it, they replied by devoting their fortunes and their lives to his defence. (*a*)

XVIII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 227. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 304.

"*Lorenzo, who had arrived at Naples not merely an unprotected stranger, but an open enemy, left that place at the end of three months, in the character of an ally and a friend.*"

It is remarkable that this event, the visit of Lorenzo to Naples, should have afforded the

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(*a*) "Les Florentins appelés à ce conseil, répondirent à cette *interpellation généreuse*, en s'engageant à consacrer leurs fortunes et leurs vies à la défense de Laurent de Médicis."—*Hist. des Rep. vol.* xi. *p.* 123.

subject of an Epic Poem to a nobleman of high rank and celebrity, in the very place to which such visit was paid. A few years since, the Marquis di Montrone, chamberlain to the king of Naples, impressed with the idea of the singularity of the attempt, the persevering courage with which it was executed, the success with which it was attended, and the effect it produced in the general pacification of Italy, conceived that if combined with other circumstances in the life and character of Lorenzo, it would afford materials for a poem, novel in its kind, deeply productive of interest, calculated to inculcate sound principles of political conduct, and to sanction and promote that appeal to justice and reason in the dissensions of rival states, which it was the principal object of the life of Lorenzo to establish and recommend.

The journals of Italy have spoken of this work in terms of great commendation. From these we learn that the author had already distinguished himself by several poetical productions, published at Milan and Bologna, which had established his reputation throughout Italy; but if we may assent to their judgment, the present poem has greatly excelled all his former works. The unity of the subject, which concentrates the attention of the reader, and con-

fines his anxiety to a single result, by no means prevents the author from adverting to other circumstances, and enlivening his poem with various interesting episodes, which, whilst they incidentally bear upon, and promote the general object, serve to diversify and enliven the work. The period of time in which Lorenzo was placed, between that of his grandfather Cosmo de' Medici, and of his son Leo X., when the sciences and the arts were recalled to life, and permanently established in Europe; the evident alteration produced in the opinions and conduct of the Italian states, who struck with the magnanimous conduct, and convinced by the representations of an individual, seemed to have dismissed their jealousies, and if not broken in upon by the unfortunate irruption of Charles VIII., would in all probability have carried the maxims of Lorenzo more fully into effect; the cruel and unsparing character of Ferdinand of Naples, remarkable for his breach of faith to such of his refractory nobles as had confided in his clemency; the difficulties with which Lorenzo was surrounded, when after having escaped from the hands of the assassin, he found himself attacked by adjacent states, much more powerful than that of Florence, and not only in imminent danger himself, but likely to bring down destruction upon his fellow citizens; and lastly, the magnanimous resolution to terminate

this state of anxiety by delivering himself up, unconditionally, into the hands of his most bitter enemy, and either to effect a reconciliation with him, or sacrifice his life in the attempt; these are the leading circumstances upon which the poem is founded, and it must be acknowledged, that if treated with a degree of ability equal to the subject, they are eminently calculated to attract the attention, and to excite the feelings of the reader.

The poem, we are informed, is still further enlivened by the introduction of a variety of singular characters, peculiar to the times, particularly that of the enthusiastic but unfortunate Savonarola; by the striking picture of conjugal affection exhibited by Clarice de' Medici, on the departure and during the absence of her husband Lorenzo; by a picturesque and vivid description of the favorite villa of Lorenzo, called *Ambra;* and by many other objects and incidents, which cannot fail to present themselves in abundance to a writer of imagination and talent in the prosecution of such a work.

In the execution of his poem, the author has followed the example of Dante, and adopted the *terza rima,* in preference to the *ottava* of Ariosto and Tasso; in which he is certainly

not to be condemned; the grave and impressive effect of that measure appearing to be much more suitable to a serious and long-continued poem, than the perpetual repetition of similar stanzas which almost uniformly terminate the sense at the same line; whilst the *terza rima* freely admits of a continuation of the sense from stanza to stanza, and in this respect unites the variety of blank verse with the harmony of rhyme.

Such is the account which I have been enabled to give, from the literary journals of Italy, of the new epic poem, intitled "*Lorenzo il Magnifico*;" but as some of my readers, to whom the Italian language is familiar, may be desirous of seeing a more ample critique of the work, with some specimens of the style, I shall insert two of these articles, one published at Florence, the other at Naples, amongst the documents at the close of this volume, (*a*) as recording the merits of a publication intended to recal and recommend to more general attention the magnanimous conduct of Lorenzo de' Medici, and to shew how much may be effected, even in situations the most unfavourable and hopeless by a fearless reliance on a just cause, and by a generous confidence in

(*a*) *v. Appendix, No.* XII.

the existence, even in the most prejudiced and hardened bosoms, of a sense of their own real interests.

XIX.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 229. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 308.

Translation of the Latin lines of Politiano, addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici on his return from Naples.

How should I joy to touch Lorenzo's hand,
Returning safely to his native land!
But such the long and gratulating train
That scarce his halls the joyful crowds contain.
—Amidst the purpled senate, round him prest,
He stands, in stature loftier than the rest.
—Shall I approach?—the envious throng denies:
—Or speak?—in fear the faltering accent dies:
—Or see him?—to my share this sure may fall,
For from the midst he overtops them all!
Mark how th' encircling glories round him spread
Pour their full radiance o'er his honour'd head!
Whilst he salutes the friends that circling stand
With cheerful looks, and nods, and voice, and hand.
—Enough for me that with the rest array'd,
My love is shewn, my duteous vows are paid.
—Go, then, my verse, salute the best of friends;
And say, "These faithful lines Politian sends."

XX.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 255. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 343.

"*It is from the writings which yet remain of Lorenzo de' Medici that we are to acquire a just idea of his general character as a poet, and to determine how far they have operated in effecting a reformation in the taste of his countrymen, or in opening the way to subsequent improvement.*".

Amongst the modern writers of Italy whose works, both in poetry and prose, stand high in the public estimation, is the late Lorenzo Pignotti, one of the authors enumerated by Pozzetti as intitled to *lasting fame*. His history of Tuscany, which was not published till after the death of the author, extends from the rise of the republic to the establishment of an absolute authority in Florence, and is accompanied with dissertations on science, literature, and the fine arts.(*a*) In this work the author has

(*a*) *Storia della Toscana, sino al principato; con diversi saggi sulle scienze, lettere e arti, di Lorenzo Pignotti Istoriografo Regio. in* ix. *tom. Pisa,* 1813, *etc.*

had occasion to refer to the conduct and character of Lorenzo de' Medici, and has at times adverted to some passages in the English history of his life.

After some previous observations, Pignotti thus characterizes the poetry of Lorenzo. "His collection of Lyric Poems has great merit. The ideas are dictated by a fine imagination, and are frequently new, sometimes sublime. Many of them might be united, which would shew how superior he is to the swarm of cold versifiers who poured out their productions in the succeeding century, and who in so many volumes have collected only

"*Fior, frondi, erbe, ombre, antri, onde, aure soavi.*"
Petr.

"But to these poems of Lorenzo some important accompaniments are wanting; these are facility of style, and that poetical colouring, which united with facility, produces that harmony which delights the ear, and at the same time expresses the sentiment clearly without becoming vulgar. Great poets have shewn that the commonest things may be covered by a poetical varnish, and this is of such importance, that for the sake of it we frequently bear with low and trifling sentiments; as rude and plebeian persons obtain admission into good com-

pany by a fine dress. It is not that Lorenzo is altogether deprived of this style, but it is not frequent with him; there is often a harshness—often a want of harmony, of clearness, and generally, of felicity of expression. He is a painter whose figures are not correctly drawn, the outlines are too sharp, and the colouring not sufficiently natural. Few of the literati of that age were able to perceive these defects; insomuch that Pico of Mirandola, attending more to the thoughts than the style, and blinded by the partiality of friendship, has exalted his poetry above that of Dante and Petrarca. Through a similar motive the English author of the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici praises his writings superlatively. He has translated some of them with tolerable fidelity—but a stranger, however he may understand a language not his own, can with difficulty perceive its poetical refinements.

"He has however had the merit of drawing from obscurity several of the poetical pieces of Lorenzo, and amongst others the beautiful poem intitled *Ambra*. This is the name given by Poliziano and Lorenzo to the Villa Cajano near the Ombrone. The English author supposes that there was an island to which Lorenzo was accustomed to resort for his amusement; that a flood in the river destroyed it, and that Lorenzo has represented this in a poetical garb in

his verses. A nymph named Ambra bathing in the Ombrone, the river god is enamoured of her, he endeavours to seize upon her, she flies away along the banks. The river follows, but cannot overtake her. He calls for assistance to Arno, his elder brother, who swells up his stream and prevents her further flight. Ombrone has nearly reached her, when she pours out her supplications to Diana; and, as Daphne was transformed into a laurel, she is changed into a rock. It appears to me that it was the intention of Lorenzo to celebrate his villa of Ambra, which at a time of inundation is frequently surrounded by water, and to give a poetic origin to his favorite residence, and the lovely eminence on which it is placed. No memorial remains that there ever was an island in the Ombrone, the bed of which is narrow near Poggio a Cajano, and seems not capable of containing an island where Lorenzo might take his pleasure; (*a*) and the verses,

> In guisa allor di piccola isoletta
> Ombrone amante superbo *Ambra* cinge, &c.

favour this construction." (*b*)

(*a*) This explanation, by a person so well qualified by his local knowledge to form a judgment, may be considered as satisfactory.

(*b*) "Il *Canzionere* ha molto merito: le idee son dettati da

Upon this extract, I feel it incumbent on me to offer a few brief remarks; particularly as I can by no means assent to the rules set up by

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vaga immaginazione; spesso nuove; talora sublimi. Se ne potrebbero unire insieme molti, il complesso delle quali mostrebbere questo poeta superiore a quello sciame di freddi rimatori che affollarono di versi il secolo seguente, e che in tanti volumi non hanno altro unito insieme che,

"Fior, frondi, erbe, ombre, antri, onde, aure soavi."
Petr.

"Ma a questi poesie di Lorenzo manca qualche condimento importante, cioè facilita di stile, e quel colorito poetico, che unito appunto colla facilità produce l'armonia, che lusinga sì soavamente l'orecchio, e che nello stesso tempo esprime con evidenza, ma senza bassezza, il pensiero. Hanno mostrato i gran poeti, che le cose più commune possono coprirsi d'una vernice poetica: questo pregio è di tanta importanza, che al suo favore passano applauditi talora dei deboli e bassi concetti, come rozze e plebee persone entrano in una festa pel loro vestito nobile. Non è già che Lorenzo sia affatto privo di questo stile, ma non è frequente: spesso durezza, spesso mancanza d'armonia, di chiarezza, e in generale di felicità d'espressione. E' un pittore le di cui figure sovente non sono naturalmente atteggiate, hanno i contorni taglienti, e i colori non assai naturali. Pochi dei letterati di quel secolo erano atti a sentir questi difetti: perciò lo stesso Pico della Mirandola, intento più ai pensieri che allo stile, e acciecato anche un poco dalla parzialità verso l'amico, sollevò le sue poesie su quelle di Dante e Petrarca.

"Per un simil motivo, l' illustre Inglese, scrittore della vita di Lorenzo il Magnifico, le va soverchiamente esaltando, e ne

Pignotti for deciding on the merits of poetical composition, or admit that the essence of poetry consists, as he conceives, in varnishing over

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traduce alcune assai fedelmente: ma un forestiere, per quanto bene possieda una lingua non sua, difficilmente può conoscerne le finizze poetiche. Esso però ha il merito d' aver tratto dall' oscurità molte poesie di Lorenzo, e fra queste il grazioso poemetto di Lorenzo intitolato *Ambra*, che non doveva restarvi. Ambra è il nome dato da Poliziano e Lorenzo alla villa di Cajano dal fiume Ombrone. Crede l' inglese autore, che fosse in esso un isoletta, ove andasse a deliziarsi Lorenzo, che una piena dell' Ombrone la distruggesse, e che Lorenzo abbia vestito poeticamente questo avvenimento in quei versi. Una ninfa chiamata Ambra bagnandosi nel fiume lo innamora: ei corre per abbracciarla, illa fugge lungo le sue ripe: il fiume la perseguita ma non può giungerla; chiede ajuto al suo fratello maggiore *Arno;* che gonfia le sue acque, e le impedisce il fuggire più oltre. Ombrone sta per giungerla; ella chiede aita a Diana, e come Dafne in lauro, è trasformata in sasso. A noi pare che abbia voluto piuttosto corteggiare con quella favola la sua villa Ambra, che nelle inondazioni vide spesso i campi che la circondano ripieni d' acqua, e dare una poetica origine alla sua diletta villa, e all' amena collina ov' è posta.

" Scrisse Lorenzo anche delle poesie facete, come *i Beoni, La compagnia del Mantellaccio, e i Canti carnascialeschi;* e diede ordine e forma migliore agli spettacoli ov' eran cantati. La Nencia può riguardarsi la prima poesia in lingua contadinesca, che ricevette poi dal Baldovini la perfezione nel Cecco da Varlungo; genere di poesia però di cui non è gran gloria l' abbondare. Le Musè non amano molto questo lin-

weak, insipid, and trivial thoughts with elevated language and graceful expression. This definition, it may be observed, falls greatly short of what might be expected as a description of genuine and elevated poetry; the essence of which must consist in the strength and novelty of the thought, and in the aptitude and propriety of the language to express such thought in the most impressive and effectual manner. Such at least are the precepts we have been taught by one of our countrymen:

> "Expression is the dress of thought, and still
> Appears more decent as more suitable;
> A vile conceit in pompous words exprest
> Is like a clown in regal purple drest."
>
> *Essay on Criticism.*

If under this point of view we consider the poetry of Lorenzo, and observe the vigour of his sentiments, the richness and abundance of his poetic imagery, and the flexibility of his language, adapting itself with equal ease to every species of composition, we shall find, that however he may have been exceeded by

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guaggio. Può una gentil donna mascherarsi una volta o due da contadina, e usai per vezzo quella lingua ma disgusterebbe, se lo replicasse troppo spesso."—*Pignotti Storia di Toscana, tom.* ix. *p.* 125, *&c.*

subsequent writers in delicacy and polish of style, yet in the great departments of poetic composition, he maintains his rank amongst the proudest of his rivals in subsequent times; and that although his language frequently exhibits a certain negligence and rusticity of expression, which would be inadmissible in the productions of the present day, yet these are not such as greatly to diminish, much less to destroy, the spirit of genuine poetry by which his writings are animated.

To the observation of M. Pignotti, that "*however well a person may understand a foreign language, he can with difficulty enter into its poetical refinements,*" it would not become me on the present occasion to object; nor is it without great hesitation that I have ventured to advance an opinion on this subject,—a step which I certainly should not have taken, had I not found that opinion sanctioned by some of the most celebrated critics that Italy has produced. But in fully acceding to the remark of M. Pignotti in the individual instance, I can by no means assent to it as a general rule. The perception of truth and of falsehood, of excellencies and defects, is common to all; and a just sentiment or a beautiful image approves itself to every cultivated mind in whatever language it may be expressed. But not only may

the beauties of composition be deeply felt and fully understood by a stranger, it may also be observed, that instances have occurred in which a foreign language, and particularly that of Italy, has been successfully adopted by the native of another country as the vehicle of his own thoughts. Of this, illustrious examples may be given in Milton, and in Menage; and a still more remarkable one in the productions of a contemporary and countryman of our own, (*a*) written before he had visited the classic soil of Italy, but which have excited the most lively applause, even in the natives of that country, and prepared for him a reception equally honourable to them and to himself.

If, indeed, it be the fact, that the poetry of any nation can only be properly appreciated by a native, the literary world has long laboured under an egregious error. Such a rule would at once extinguish the light of literature, and not only sweep away the innumerable volumes of criticism which, during the five last centuries, have been employed in purifying the text, illustrating the sense, and pointing out the beauties of the ancient Greek and Roman poets, but would consign to oblivion the valuable labours of some

(*a*) T. J. Mathias, Esq.

of the most distinguished authors of the present times. To say nothing of the great works of Andres and Boutterwek, in which the productions of the chief authors of the different nations of Europe are fully examined, and their merits discussed and appreciated. (*a*) The

(*a*) "Je ne connais que deux ouvrages que comprennent l'histoire de toute la partie de la litterature dont je parlerai dans ces cours. Le premier, dont le plan est bien plus vaste encore, est celui d'Andres, jesuite Espagnol, professeur à Mantoue; *Dell' Origine e de' progressi d'ogni letteratura*, 5 (7) *tom.* 4°. *Parma*, 1782. Il esquisse l'histoire de toutes les sciences humaines dans toutes les langues, et dans tous l'univers; et avec une vaste erudition, il develope d'une manière philosophique la marche general de l'esprit humain; mais comme il ne donne jamais d'exemple, qu'il n'analyse point le goût particulier de chaque nation, que ses jugemens rapides ne sont presque jamais motivés, il ne laisse aucun idée nette des écrivains et des ouvrages dont il a rassemblé les noms, et il ne met jamais son lecteur à portée de juger par lui-meme.

"Il y a beaucoup plus d'instruction pratique à retirer de l'ouvrage de Boutterwek, professeur à Gottingue, qui a entrepris l'histoire de la litterature, proprement dite, dans l'Europe moderne. (*Friedrich Boutterwek geschichte der Schonen Wissenchaften*, 8 *vol. in* 8°. 1801—1810.) Il n'a encore écrit que l'histoire des litteratures d'Italie, d'Espagne, de Portugal, de France, et d'Angleterre; mais il l'a fait avec un étendue d'erudition, et une loyauté dans la manière d'en faire profiter ses lecteurs, que semblent propre aux savans allemands. C'est de tous les ouvrages de critique celui dont j'ai tiré le plus grand parti, et auquel j'ai emprunté le plus de faits et de connaissances."—*Sismondi, de la Lett. du Midi de l'Europe, tom.* i. *p.* 12.

celebrated disquisitions of Herder and Schlegel on the character and merits of Shakspeare, must have been suppressed; the critiques of Madame de Stael on the state of literature in Germany and England must have remained a dead letter, and the numerous discussions by the writers of Germany, France, and England, on the poets and literature of Italy, would never have been produced. If the beauties of a language cannot be understood and appreciated by a stranger, how has it happened that the great poets of Italy have burst the barriers of their country, and become the poets of Europe? That Petrarca, Ariosto, Tasso, and many others, are as well known amongst the literati of London and Paris, as amongst those of Florence or Rome. If the maxim of Pignotti were once to be established, they must retire again to their native limits between the Alps and the sea; and that intercourse, which by the free communication of sentiments and language, is destined to civilize the world, must be for ever relinquished.

I presume, then, that notwithstanding the decision of M. Pignotti, I may yet be allowed, in addition to the testimony I have before adduced of the high estimation in which the poetical character of Lorenzo is held, to resort to the authority of some other eminent critics,

whose intimate acquaintance with the language and writers of Italy, intitles them, although not natives of that country, to a hearing in the discussion of the present question. The first of these to whom I shall refer is M. de Sismondi, whose writings I have already so frequently quoted, and who, a few years since, enriched the republic of letters with a work of distinguished merit on the literature of the Southern nations of Europe. (*a*) Amongst the great variety of subjects on which M. de Sismondi had occasion to treat, it was impossible for him to pass over the productions of Lorenzo de' Medici, of which, after briefly noticing the degraded state of literature in Italy in the latter part of the fifteenth century, he gives the following account:—"Perhaps the first person to whom we may attribute the revival of Italian poetry, was, at the same time, one of the greatest men of his age, and of those which have since occurred. This was Lorenzo de' Medici, chief of the Florentine republic, and arbiter of the whole political state of Italy. Lorenzo *the Magnificent* wrote his first poems before he was twenty years of age. A whole century had passed since Petrarca and Boccaccio, re-

(*a*) *De la litterature du Midi de l'Europe*, 4 *tom.* 8°. *Par.* 1813.

nouncing subjects of love, had ceased to write Italian verses, and in this long interval there appears not a single Italian poet that deserves to be quoted. Lorenzo undertook to re-establish the poetry of Italy in the same state as Petrarca had left it; but this man, so superior by the greatness of his character, and the universality of his talents, had not that of *versification* in a degree equal to that of Petrarca. In his love verses, his sonnets, and his odes, we find less sweetness and harmony, a fainter degree of poetical colouring, and what surprises us still more, a ruder expression, which reminds us of the infancy of a language. On the other hand, his ideas seem to be more natural, and are often accompanied by a great charm of imagination and colour. His liveliest productions are derived from rural scenery, and it is surprizing to find the statesman so conversant with country life. His works contain upwards of one hundred and forty sonnets, and about twenty *canzoni*, almost all written in honour of Lucretia de' Donati. He has not, however, named her; and he seems to have chosen her only as the object of a poetical passion, and as a subject for his verse. This he has done with a delicacy worthy of Petrarca, and which he has not always exhibited in his other amours. But Lorenzo did not confine himself to lyric poetry; he attempted all kinds,

and shewed in every one the flexibility of his talents, the riches of his imagination. His poem of *Ambra*, intended to celebrate the delicious gardens which he had planted in a small island in the river Ombrone, and which were carried away by the river, are written in graceful octave verse. The *Nencia da Barberino*, written in the language of the peasantry of Tuscany, in stanzas full of natural simplicity, gaiety, and grace, celebrates the beauties of a peasant girl. His *Altercazione* is a philosophical and moral poem, in which the deepest truths of the Platonic philosophy are brought forwards with as much clearness as grandeur. In his *Beoni*, he has left us an ingenious and lively satire against drunkenness; and in his carnival songs, couplets full of gaiety, that accompanied the triumphal feasts which he gave to, and shared with, the people. In his *Canzone a Ballo*, we have other verses which he sung himself, when he took a part in the dances exhibited in public; and in his *Orazione*, we have sacred hymns which belong to the highest style of lyric poetry.

"Such was the brilliant imagination, such the grace and flexibility of talent of a man for whom poetry was nothing more than an amusement, which was scarcely noticed in his brilliant political career; of a man who, concentering in

himself alone all the power of the republic, never allowed the people to think that he had ceased to be a sovereign; of a man who, *by the superiority of his character and his talents, governed all Italy as he governed Florence, who preserved it in peace, and retarded as long as he lived the calamities with which it was overwhelmed two years after his death;* of a man who was at the same time the support of the Platonic philosophy, the promoter of and fellow-labourer in all learned studies, the friend of all the philosophers, of all the poets, the protector of all the artists; of a man, in short, who developed and excited the fine genius of Michel Agnolo." (*a*)

(*a*) "Le premier peut-être auquel on puisse attribuer le renouvellement de la poésie Italienne, fut en même temps *un des plus grands hommes de son siècle et de ceux qui sont venus après lui;* ce fut Laurent de Médicis, chef de la république Florentine, et arbitre de toute la politique d'Italie (1448-1492). Laurent-le-Magnifique écrivit ses premières poésies avant d'avoir vingt ans (1465-1469). C'était cependant déjà un siècle après que Pétrarque et Boccace, renonçant à l'amour, avaient cessé d'écrire en vers Italiens; et dans ce long intervalle il ne se présente pas un poète digne d'être cité. Laurent essaya de reprendre la poésie là où Pétrarque l'avait laissée; mais cet homme, si supérieur par la grandeur de son caractère et par l'universalité de ses talens, n'avait point, au même degré que Pétrarque, celui de la versification. On trouve dans ses vers d'amour, dans ses sonnets et ses *can-*

Nor does M. de Sismondi appear to have adopted the opinion of Pignotti, or to have had any idea of the impropriety or indelicacy of

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zoni, bien moins de douceur et d'harmonie, des couleurs poétiques moins éclatantes, et, ce qui surprendra davantage, une langue bien plus rude, et qui semble plus rapprochée de son enfance ; d'autre part, les idées semblent plus naturelles, et elles sont souvent accompagnées d'un grand charme d'imagination et de coloris. Les tableaux les plus rians sont empruntés sans cesse de la campagne, et l'on s'étonne de voir l'homme d'Etat connaître si bien la vie des champs. On trouve dans la collection de ses œuvres plus de cent quarante sonnets, et une vingtaine de *canzoni*, faites presque toujours en l'honneur de Lucrezia des Donati ; il ne la nomme cependant jamais, et il semble ne l'avoir choisie que comme objet d'un amour poétique, et pour avoir quelqu'un à chanter dans ses vers. Il l'a fait avec une pureté digne de Pétrarque, et qu'il n'a pas toujours portée dans ses autres amours. Mais Laurent de Médicis ne s'en tint point au genre lyrique, il s'essaya dans tous, il montra dans tous la flexibilité de son talent, la richesse de son imagination. Son poëme de *l'Ambra*, destiné à célébrer les jardins délicieux qu'il avait plantés dans une île au milieu de l'Ombrone, et qui furent emportés par la rivière, est en octaves gracieuses ; *la Nencia da Barberino*, écrite dans le langage des paysans de Toscane, célèbre dans des stances pleines de naïveté, de grâces, et de gaîté, la beauté d'une paysanne ; *l'Altercazione* est un poëme philosophique et moral, dans lequel les vérités les plus relevées de la doctrine de Platon sont exposées avec autant de clarté que de noblesse. Laurent de Médicis a laissé dans les *Béoni*, ou buveurs, une satire ingénieuse et piquante contre l'ivrognerie ; dans les chants de Carnaval, des couplets badins et d'une extrême gaîté qui accompagnaient les fêtes triomphales qu'il donnait au peuple,

stating his own sentiments on the occasion. On the contrary, he not only conceives that a writer of one country may be allowed to form a judgment of the language and character of the poetry of another, but he has chosen as his guide in a work expressly written on the literature of Italy by a native of France, the late celebrated M. Ginguené, (*a*) who, as M. de

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et qu'il partageait avec lui ; dans ses rondes, d'autres couplets qu'il chantait lui-même au milieu des danses auxquelles il prenait part sur la place publique ; enfin dans ses oraisons, des hymnes sacrées qui appartiennent au genre lyrique le plus élevé.

"Telle était la brillante imagination, telle était la grâce et la flexibilité de talent d'un homme pour qui la poésie ne fut jamais qu'un délassement, à peine aperçu dans sa brillante carrière politique ; d'un homme qui, concentrant en lui seul tous les pouvoirs d'une république, ne laissa jamais appercevoir à son peuple qu'il avait cessé d'être souverain ; d'un homme qui, par la supériorité de son caractère et de ses talens, gouverna l'Italie entière comme il gouvernait Florence, qui la maintint en paix, et qui retarda, tant qu'il vécut, les calamités dont elle fut comme écrasée deux ans après sa mort ; d'un homme qui, dans le même temps, était le soutien de la philosophie platonicienne, le promoteur, le collaborateur de toutes les études savantes, l'ami de tous les philosophes, de tous les poëtes, le protecteur de tous les artistes ; d'un homme enfin qui développa, qui échauffa le beau génie de Michel-Angé."—*Sismondi, de la Litterature du Midi de l'Europe, tom.* ii. *p.* 37—40.

(*a*) *Histoire Littéraire d'Italie,* (6 *tom.* 8°. *Paris,* 1811).

Sismondi justly observes, "had made the study of Italian literature the business of his life; and whose pure and elegant taste, and undoubted erudition, entitle him to the full confidence of his readers;" to which I shall add, that he was one of the very few of his countrymen who have been able to divest themselves of their national prejudices, and who have evinced an impartial spirit of criticism, and a just feeling for the great productions of Italian genius.

In order, therefore, that I may not again obtrude upon the reader my own opinions on the poetry of Lorenzo, I shall, without hesitation, resign myself to the decision of this distinguished critic, and shall terminate this long note by referring to an extract from the concluding observations of M. Ginguené on that subject; which I am the more induced to do, as they will be found not only to confirm every assertion I have ventured to make, but to contain many additional and interesting remarks on the poetry of Lorenzo de' Medici. (*a*)

(*a*) *v. Appendix, No.* XIII.

XXI.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 277, *note* (*b*). 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 370, *note* (*b*).

"*In the general collection of the poems of Lorenzo, printed by Aldo in* 1544, *his sonnets are accompanied by a copious commentary which exhibits many striking traits of his character, and is a very favourable specimen of his prose composition.*"

THE piece above referred to is the only prose composition from the pen of Lorenzo that seems to have been written with any intention of publication, and although inserted in the edition of Aldo, has never since been reprinted. "It is surprising," says M. Ginguené, "that they have never republished this commentary in Italy, precious and curious as it is in more points of view than one; it gives another value than that of simple rarity to the edition of 1554, where alone it is to be found."(*a*) In the intro-

(*a*) "L'exposition que Laurent fait dans son commentaire des degrés par laquelle il passa de cet amour imaginaire à

duction to this commentary, the author has undertaken to defend himself for devoting so much of his time to poetical compositions in his native tongue, and especially for writing a commentary on his own sonnets; in the course of which vindication, he has introduced frequent allusions to the circumstances of his own life and occupations, and many judicious observations on the Italian language, which render it not only valuable for the manner in which it is written, but for the information which it contains. But this piece is still more remarkable as a very singular specimen of genuine Italian composition, at a period when the literature of Italy was in the lowest state of depression, (*a*) and the learned almost wholly devoted to the cultivation of Latin, had either abandoned altoge-

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une passion réelle, intéresse par la naïveté des aveux autant que par l'élégante simplicité du style. Il est surprenant que l'on n'ai jamais reimprimé en Italie ce commentaire, précieux et curieux sous plus d'un rapport. Il donne un autre prix que celui de la simple rareté à cette édition de 1554, la seule où il se trouve."—*Ging. Hist. Lit. d'Italie, tom.* iii. *p.* 488.

(*a*) From this general remark we may perhaps exempt some of the Tracts of Leo Battista Alberti, which although inserted by Cosimo Bartoli, in his translation of the Latin pieces of Alberti, published by him at Venice in 1578, were undoubtedly originally written in Italian by Alberti, and published in the preceding century.—*v. Pozzetti, Dissert. I. p.* 10, *et seq.*

ther their native tongue, or expressed themselves in it in so rude and incorrect a manner as indicated the contempt in which it was held. (*a*) It is surely, then, not a little extraordinary that at a time like this, a piece should have been written not only in a correct and easy style, impressing upon the reader its clear and distinct meaning, but with a grace and elegance of expression, that rivalled the great masters of the preceding century, and might have served as a model, not only to his own, but to subsequent times. These considerations have induced me to insert the Introduction to this Commentary amongst the documents at the close of the present volume, so as to afford the Italian scholar a sufficient specimen of the style of Lorenzo, in his prose writings, to enable him to judge of the foregoing observations. (*b*)

(*a*) *v. Life of Lor.* 4°. *ed. vol.* i. *p.* 241. 8°. *ed. vol.* i. *p.* 323.

(*b*) *v. Appendix, No.* XIV.

XXII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 4. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 5.

" *In these transactions we may trace the first decisive instance of that political arrangement which was more fully developed, and more widely extended in the succeeding century, and which has since been denominated the balance of power.*"

THE efforts made in the fifteenth century to establish a balance of power in Italy, or in other words, to set up the decisions of reason and justice in preference to those of the sword, led the way to the extension of those maxims amongst the powers of Europe in subsequent times; and it is in these efforts that we are to trace the germ of that seed which it may yet be hoped is destined one day to spread its branches over the face of the earth.(*a*)

(*a*) " A collective body of men," says Lady M. W. Montagu, " make a gradual progress in understanding, like that of a single individual. When I reflect on the vast increase of useful as well as speculative knowledge the last three hundred

The most striking example of the influence of these measures was given by Lorenzo de' Medici at an early period of his life, when he made his voyage to Naples, and voluntarily placed himself in the power of a sovereign with whom he was then engaged in actual hostilities. The happy result of this expedition gave him great authority in the affairs of Italy, and by his acknowledged discretion and conciliatory disposition, he became by degrees the arbiter of the dissensions of the Italian states; the rulers of which were anxious to maintain with him an intercourse of kind offices. Thus the Baglioni of Perugia, the Vitelli of Città de Castello, the Bentivoli of Bologna, the Malespini of Ravenna, the Manfredi of Faenza, and the other princes of Italy, resorted to him on all occasions,

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years has produced, and that the peasants of this age have more conveniencies than the first emperors of Rome had any notion of, I imagine we are now arrived at that period which answers to *fifteen*. I cannot think we are older, when I recollect the many palpable follies which are still (almost) universally persisted in. I place that of *war* as senseless as the boxing of school-boys, and whenever we come to man's estate, (perhaps a thousand years hence), I do not doubt it will appear as ridiculous as the pranks of unlucky lads. Several discoveries will then be made, and several truths made clear, of which we have now no more idea than the ancients had of the circulation of the blood, or the optics of Sir Isaac Newton."—*Letter to the Countess of Bute, Works, vol.* v. *p.* 75.

and considered him as their most prudent adviser, and their most powerful friend.(*a*) But whilst amongst these it was his constant endeavour to remove all causes of contention that might interrupt the general tranquillity, he was not less anxious to counteract the ambitious views of the larger states, which were always prepared to avail themselves of any opportunity of increasing their territory, and extending their influence. It has been remarked, that notwithstanding the prosperity which the Florentine state enjoyed under his direction, little or no additions were made during his life to the limits of the Republic; but this, instead of a reproach, is a proof of that wisdom and moderation by which his political conduct was regulated. If he had indulged in himself those ambitious views which he endeavoured to repress in others, it would justly have subjected him to the odious charge of hypocrisy. Of this a memorable instance appeared in his conduct towards the state of Sienna, then independent on that of Florence, and which by its internal dissensions had af-

(*a*) "La Città di Firenze e Lorenzo non hanno meno cura che lo stato di Bologna, di Perugia, di Castello, di Faenza, e di Siena si conservino nell' esser loro, che lo stato loro proprio, e che questo la città lo fa con spesa assai ordinaria et extraordinaria."—*Ex Ep. P. Ant. Soderini Legati ad Neapol. Regem. Nov.* 1489.

forded an opportunity of subjecting it to the Florentine government. But instead of attempting so invidious a measure, he availed himself of this circumstance only to strengthen the ties of friendship by which the two states were before bound; the consequence of which was, that he never passed through Sienna, or resorted on account of his health to any part of its territory, without receiving proofs of the attachment of the magistrates and inhabitants, in presents, or other expressions of their esteem. (*a*) In like manner it has been said that he wished to obtain the dominion of Piombino, the situation of which was so favorable, that it had been observed, that if Alfonso of Naples had possessed himself of it in 1448, he would easily have become master of the whole of Tuscany; (*b*) but it appears, that although he was warmly urged to this attempt by his son-in-law, Francesco Cibò, he rejected his advice as inconsistent with his own situation and cha-

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(*a*) In the archives of the Palazzo Vecchio, Filza xviii. is a description of the presents made to Lorenzo on his passing through that city.—*v. Fabron. in App.* 195.

(*b*) "Io ho sentito dire da chi lo ha di bocca di persona di auctorità et da crederli, che se il re Alfonso pigliava Piombino nel 1448, non faceva dubbio alcuno di farsi padrone di tutta la Toscana."—*Fabr. Vita Laur. App. No.* 196.

racter. By these and similar instances of the justice and disinterestedness of his conduct he laid the foundation of that confidence which was placed in him by the different states and sovereigns of Italy, and which enabled him to interfere in their concerns, and to reconcile their differences with that uniform success which has been related at large in the account of his life. (*a*)

The influence which Lorenzo thus possessed, and the results to which it gave rise, are however denied by M. de Sismondi, who asserts, that the state of tranquillity which Italy enjoyed at the close of the fifteenth century was not owing to the political conduct of any "individual, but to a concurrence of circumstances which could not long continue." (*b*) This senti-

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(*a*) Lorenzo might perhaps be described in the language of Gondibert, as

> "A prince that more enlarges power than lands,
> Whose greatness is not what his map contains;
> But thinks *that* his where he at full commands,
> Not where his *coin* does pass, but *power* remains."

(*b*) "Aussi le repos qu'on goûtoit à la fin du quinzième siècle, ce repos si favorable aux lettres et aux arts, et que tous les Italiens ont célébré, pour l'opposer aux guerres longues et sanglantes qui alloient bientôt commencer, n'étoit il point le

ment, so frequently repeated in the history of the Italian republics, is peculiar to its author. That Lorenzo de' Medici has been considered, both by contemporary and subsequent historians, as the first person who formed a due estimate of the different states of Europe, and who had conceived the idea of balancing their powers so as to promote their mutual interests, is a fact which has attained such a general assent, as to have become almost proverbial. Of this a remarkable instance may be given from the works of an author, who has adverted to this subject in such a manner as may render a brief reference to them not uninteresting. This author is Trajano Boccalini, whose writings display a thorough acquaintance with the political state of the times in which he lived, although for reasons sufficiently obvious, he was obliged to convey his opinions in an allegorical and suppositious form. Boccalini was born in 1559, and wrote about a century after the death of Lorenzo. Amongst other imaginary statements, in which he envelopes his real sentiments, he supposes that the different powers of Europe had determined to take measures for the establishment of their general tranquil-

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fruit de la politique d'un homme, mais le résultat d'un ensemble de circonstances qui ne pouvoient pas durer long temps."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 354.

lity, for which purpose they had agreed to meet at a stated time, and to compare their relative strength by weighing each other, in order that the too powerful might be restrained and the weak assisted, so as to keep up a proper equilibrium between them. "On this occasion," says he, "many men of distinguished genius were proposed for the honourable office of weighing these different states; but it appeared, that for a hundred years and upwards this had been performed by the illustrious family of the Medici, and in particular by the great Lorenzo; which prerogative, although it seemed to many that it might much offend the superiority of the Pope and the prudence of the Venetian senate, (who equally with Lorenzo and the Florentine Republic have endeavoured to maintain, both in and out of Italy, an equalization of strength amongst the different powers of Europe,) yet, *by the common consent of all historians*, the office was conferred upon Lorenzo," who is supposed to have taken this task upon himself, and who accordingly delivers his opinions on a variety of political subjects that arise in the execution of it. (*a*)

(*a*) *Boccalini, Pietra del Paragone politico.—Ed. in Cosmop. per. Corn. Last.* 1664, *p.* 92.

That this universal opinion, *or common consent of all historians*, which was prevalent at the expiration of a century after the death of Lorenzo, has continued to the present times, may sufficiently appear by a reference to the latest historians of Italy. Galuzzi, in his introductory discourse to his History of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, informs us that Lorenzo de' Medici imagined that "a league between the King of Naples, the Republic of Florence, and the Duke of Milan, would be sufficient to restrain the Venetians, to keep the Pope in order, and to secure the repose of Italy; and that whilst he lived he continued to attend to the due observation of this treaty." The same writer also asserts, that the death of Lorenzo was the epoch of the calamities of Italy, and occasioned not only the fall of his family, but the total ruin of the republic.(*a*) Pignotti remarks that "the events that occurred after the death of Lorenzo demonstrate how unfortunate it was, and how much Italy suffered in consequence of it." (*b*) "Not only," says he, "the descent of Charles VIII. would not have taken place, but he would have seen his son raised to

(*a*) *Galuzzi, Introd. p.* xlii, xliv.

(*b*) *Storia di Toscana, vol.* vi. *p.* 265.

the papal dignity, in which case what a golden age might have arisen for Italy, and particularly for Tuscany, we can now only conjecture." Whether the other consequences to which Pignotti refers, amongst which is the prevention of the Protestant reformation, might have occurred or not, is of no importance to our present inquiry, which is only intended to demonstrate, in opposition to M. de Sismondi, that by the general assent of the Italian historians, from his own time to the present, Lorenzo de' Medici has been considered as the person who conceived the great design of a political balance amongst independent states, and whose premature death was lamented by all descriptions of people.

That this opinion of the effects produced by Lorenzo on the political state of Italy continues, notwithstanding the efforts of M. de Sismondi, to be entertained by the best informed writers of the present times, may further appear from the enlightened lectures of the Rev. Dr. George Miller on the Philosophy of Modern History, in which he attributes the establishment of a balance of power among the Italian states to Lorenzo de' Medici; and admits that he had also an influence upon other states, and that he had at almost every court agents or

correspondents, who gave him early information of every occurrence which might affect the general tranquillity.

The same writer also refers to the league amongst the Italian states to restrain the Venetians. "This original treaty," says he, "for the support of a balance of power, which had been before commenced; but interrupted by various occurrences, was, with the general consent of almost all the princes and republics of Italy, resumed in the year 1480, when it was concluded for twenty-five years. It was not however the fortune of Italy to enjoy the benefit of this wise policy during so long a period; for Lorenzo was removed by a premature death in 1492, and it was soon manifest that he alone could regulate the combination which he had formed. But though the parts of this system were too incongruous to remain longer in connection, it had, however, during twelve years exhibited the practicability and the advantage of a social incorporation of independent governments for the preservation of their common interest.

Dr. Miller also observes that M. de Sismondi has given a very unfavourable representation of the policy of Lorenzo; but to the

opinion of the modern historian of the Italian Republics, says he, "may be opposed the testimony of Macchiavelli, whom he himself has described as a friend to freedom, and that of Guicciardini, whom all have acknowledged to be impartial. The former of these eminent writers concluded his history of Florence, and the latter commenced his history of the wars of Italy, with an eulogy on Lorenzo de' Medici. M. de Sismondi, in his zeal for liberty, appears to have been unable to perceive any wisdom in a family which subverted the republican government of his favorite Florence." (*a*)

In asserting that "all the politics of the republic were concentred in the cabinet of Lorenzo de' Medici, and were consequently buried in silence and in secrecy," M. de Sismondi has only given a proof of the confidence with which writers of general history too often assume their own presumptions as matters of fact, and the negligence and contempt with which they treat any investigations and inquiries which lead them out of the common track. Their business is to give a general idea of the course of events,

(*a*) v. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Modern History, by Geo. Miller, D. D. M. R. F. A. 3 vols. 8vo. 1820. vol. iii. pp. 497, 509, 549.*

and to leave the outline to be filled up by those who may find disposition and leisure for such employment; but at all events they should be careful that this outline be correct, and that their representations should not be inconsistent with the real state of the case. If M. de Sismondi had, before he so positively decided on the conduct of Lorenzo, resorted to the ample collection of documents in the archives of Florence, he would have found that so far from its being the fact, that all negociations were carried on in the private cabinet of Lorenzo; that the letters of the Florentine envoys at the different courts were occasionally addressed either to the *Otto di Pratica*, or chief magistrates, or to Lorenzo, as they thought most advisable. Thus, in a letter from Pietro Vittori, the Florentine ambassador at Naples, to Lorenzo, dated *the 30th May*, 1489, respecting the negociation then carrying on between the king of Naples and the Pope, he says, "yesterday I had an interview with the king, and his excellency the duke, when they spoke to me on so many matters that I thought it advisable to write a part to the *Otto*, and a part to you." And again in the same letter, "The Milanese ambassador afterwards came, and many letters were read from various places, the contents of which I have communicated in part to the *Otto*." Passages which fully de-

monstrate, in contradiction to M. de Sismondi, that the utmost confidence subsisted between Lorenzo and the chief magistrates of the Republic.(a) The remark, that these transactions are buried in secrecy and silence, may perhaps apply to those persons who are at no trouble to inquire after them; but the immense collections in the different archives at Florence are open to all who wish to consult them; and the original documents published by Fabroni, and the additions made in the English Life of Lorenzo, and in the present volume, may sufficiently demonstrate that it was not from any deficiency of the means of information, or the want of authentic materials, that the erroneous and unfounded assertions before referred to, have been obtruded on the public as the narrations of genuine history.

(a) *v. Fabr. vita Laur. Med. App. No.* 202.

XXIII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 30. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 40.

" *Buccolini resided a considerable time at Florence under the safeguard of Lorenzo, honoured and respected. He afterwards went to Milan, where he did not experience the same fidelity, having been treacherously put to death there by Lodovico Sforza.*"—(*Macchiavelli, Hist. lib.* viii.)

In relating the death of Buccolini Guzzoni, at Milan, M. de Sismondi has, with his usual enmity to the character of Lorenzo, thought proper to reject the decisive testimony of Macchiavelli, as given above, and to conjecture " that it was *perhaps* by the secret connivance of Lorenzo that Buccolini was put to death at Milan :" " *peut-être avec sa connivance secrete.*"(*a*) This circumstance has afforded me an opportunity of adverting more fully to this transaction than has yet been done, and of shewing what were the sentiments of Lorenzo de' Medici, when he

(*a*) *Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 285.

supposed that those with whom he was allied had been guilty of any unjust or treacherous act. From an unpublished and confidential letter of Lorenzo to Lanfredini, the Florentine ambassador at Rome, an extract from which is given in the appendix,(*a*) it appears, that whilst Buccolini was at Florence, Lorenzo received intelligence of the death of the nephew of Buccolini, which he was apprehensive had been occasioned by violence. His language is to the following effect. After stating that Buccolini had applied for the payment of 1500 ducats, on account of what was due to him by treaty, he adds, "I observe what you mention as to the death of the nephew, which I consider as a matter of great scandal to me, it being very difficult to believe, that as he was living when the capitulation was signed, he should die a natural death in so short a time. I wish you to exert yourself in discovering the truth of this, and send me the examination and explanation of it, that I may not be disgraced; as, if he be alive, the Legate and M. Jacopo promised that he should shortly be set at liberty. I believe the disposition of the pope to be neither *wicked* nor *scandalous;* and if it were, I have observed no symptoms that he would be so towards me.

(*a*) *v. Appendix, No.* XV.

I wish, however, that this matter should be fully cleared up; for I should regard every imputation on my fidelity *more than my life*, or whatever else is more dear to me. This I expect you to believe, and to make it understood *wherever it may be necessary;* for if any injury be done to my honour, I shall not conceal my displeasure; but judging from experience, I cannot believe this will be the case. I know not whether Buccolini intends to remain here, and to purchase some residence, which we shall enable him to do when he wishes it. He has been offered an accommodation, although he has not as yet accepted it," &c. After the indignant manner in which Lorenzo thus expresses himself at the risk of offending the pope, against whom he seems not to be wholly without suspicion, is it likely that he would have had the folly and the wickedness to commit his character to the mercy of Lod. Sforza, by assenting to the murder of Buccolini?

XXIV.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 37. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 49.

"*It is not easy to say to which of the contending parties the conduct of Lorenzo was most acceptable; the pope omitted no subsequent opportunity of conferring on him and his family the most important favours, whilst Ferdinand unequivocally acknowledged, that to his friendship and fidelity he and his family were indebted for the rank they held, and for their continuance in the kingdom of Naples.*"

M. DE SISMONDI affects to discredit the accounts given in the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, of the successful interference of Lorenzo in effecting a reconciliation between Innocent VIII. and Ferdinand of Naples; which he seems to regard as an unauthenticated fact not entitled to the notice of the historian. "His panegyrists," says he, "have said that he held the balance of Italy; that he had prevented Innocent VIII. from making war upon Ferdinand, after having excommunicated him in 1489, and declared that he had forfeited the crown of

Naples; that he had prevented the Duke of Calabria from attempting, by force of arms, the defence of his son-in-law Giovanni Galeazzo Sforza, against Lodovico, his uncle; that he had, in short, been the continual guarantee and the mediator of the peace of Italy. This constant activity of Lorenzo de' Medici is possible; it is not improbable; but there exists no trace of it amongst the Florentine historians. This republic, the centre of the negociations of Italy, seems to have become a stranger to all the great interests of that country. Scipio Ammirato passes rapidly over the names of many of the Gonfaloniers, without distinguishing their administration by any event. Other historians are equally silent on the subject. They felt themselves no longer bound to continue their labours, when the interests of their country were not those of every individual." (*a*)

(*a*) " Ses panégyristes ont écrit qu'il avoit tenu la balance de l'Italie, qu'il avoit empêché Innocent VIII. de faire la guerre à Ferdinand, apres l'avoir excommunié, en 1489, et déclaré déchu du trône de Naples; qu'il avoit empêché le duc de Calabre de prendre, les armes à la main, la defense de Jean Galeaz Sforza, son gendre, contre Louis le Maure; qu'il avoit enfin été constamment le garant et le mediateur de la paix d'Italie. Cette action continuelle de Laurent de Medicis est possible, elle n'est point improbable, mais il n'en reste aucun trace dans les historiens florentins. Cette répub-

May I be allowed to ask, whether it be consistent with the character of an impartial and candid historian thus to throw discredit on incidents and facts of considerable importance and indisputable authority, because he has not met with them in writers of later date whom he has chosen to consult? Surely the evidence of original and contemporary documents are at least as well entitled to our assent as the relation of any subsequent writer on whom M. de Sismondi may choose to rely. By these it appears that the object which Lorenzo had in view was no less than the prevention of a new war in Italy. His letter, as given in the Appendix to the English History of his Life, (*a*) is a master-piece of political ability; and if we were to select a transaction in which his talents and his views appear to the greatest advantage, this would probably be the object of our

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lique, autrefois le centre de toutes les négotiations de l' Italie, sembloit devenu étrangère à tous les grands intérêts de cette contrée. Ses annales sont vides. Scipion Ammirato passe rapidement sur les noms de plusieurs gonfaloniers, sans marquer leur administration par aucun évènement. Les autres historiens se taisent également sur cette époque; ils ne se sentoient plus entraînés à écrire l'histoire, lorsque les intérêts de la patrie n'étoient plus ceux de chacun."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 346.

(*a*) *v. Appendix to Life of Lor. de' Med., No.* XLVII.

choice. Yet these important negociations, which, as they develope the measures effectually employed for the preservation of peace, are at least as valuable to posterity as the long narratives

" Of unsuccessful or successful war,",

are passed over by M. de Sismondi, with a contemptuous remark, that they may be *possible*, or, they may not be *improbable;* but that Scipio Ammirato, who did not write his history of Florence until nearly a century afterwards, says nothing on the subject!

If M. de Sismondi had thought proper to consult the very accurate and laborious History of the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, by Monsig. Fabroni, which, at the time M. de Sismondi wrote, had been published nearly thirty years, he would there have found, that the interval to which he alludes, as being void of all interest and furnishing no materials for the pages of history, was filled with negociations and transactions of the utmost importance, and was, in fact, the most active portion of the life of Lorenzo. As a proof of this, I shall lay before the reader an extract from that excellent work, in which Fabroni has given, in his own elegant Latin style, a rapid, but interesting view of the

occurrences which then took place. (*a*) In addition to which, I shall now produce, from the originals preserved in the Archives of the *Palazzo Vecchio*, at Florence, and hitherto unpublished, a portion of the correspondence between Lorenzo de' Medici and the Florentine Ambassadors, as well relating to the negociations between Ferdinand and Innocent VIII. as to various other public transactions, which, at that period, engaged the attention of the Italian states. (*b*)

These Letters will decidedly shew the vigilance with which Lorenzo de' Medici superintended the general concerns of that country, the importance universally attached to his opinion, and the promptitude and efficacy of his interference. The silence of the historians of this period, of which M. de Sismondi complains, forms the true glory of Lorenzo, as it resulted from the success of his indefatigable exertions to preserve his country and all Italy in tranquillity. Muratori commences his annals for the years 1490 and 1491, with observing, that Italy, during those years, enjoyed an enviable and general peace; but this state of repose was not preserved without an effort, and it is

(*a*) *v. Appendix, No.* XVI. (*b*) *v. Appendix, No.* XVII.

not difficult to perceive by whom that effort was made.

In fact, the period of time which M. de Sismondi has unluckily chosen to represent as that in which the state of Florence was degraded, in comparison with the other states of Italy, was that in which the labours of Lorenzo had raised it to the highest pitch of honour and respectability. Nor was the influence which he possessed in the general concerns of Italy acquired, as M. de Sismondi pretends, by depressing the liberties of his country, and substituting himself in the place of the government, but was the result of his own personal character, of the high opinion entertained of the rectitude of his views, of his prudence, good sense, and conciliatory disposition. If Lorenzo had not been a citizen of Florence, is it likely that the important negociations between the different sovereigns of Italy, and even of Europe, would have been transacted in that city? With what degree of truth, or even of plausibility, can M. de Sismondi then assert, that Lorenzo de' Medici diminished the character of his native place, when, on the contrary, the eyes of all Italy were turned upon Florence, as the place where the political balance was suspended, and where alone it could be perceived towards which side it was likely to incline?

XXV.

* *v.* 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 44. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 58.

" *The prosperity and happiness which the citizens thus enjoyed were attributed to their true sources; and Lorenzo received the best reward of his labours in the gratitude of his country.*"

M. DE SISMONDI has taken occasion to assert, " that I have extenuated the crimes of the Medici, and dissimulated or concealed the resentful spirit of the Florentines, which was far from submitting willingly to the yoke of a prince, although they suffered their liberties to be endangered by a faction."(*a*) To this he has thought proper to add, that Lorenzo de' Medici maintained his usurped authority by *bloody executions*, that he every day increased the weight of

(*a*) " Il attenue ou passe sous silence ses forfaits; il dissimule enfin l'esprit indépendent et ombrageux des Florentins, qui étoient encore bien eloignés de plier volontairement sous le joug d'un prince, encore qu'ils laissassent ébranler leur liberté par une faction."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 6.

his detested yoke over a free city; that he deprived the legitimate magistrates of the authority with which the constitution had invested them, and deterred his fellow-citizens from that public career in which before his time they had displayed such talents. (*a*) Surely before M. de Sismondi had consigned to the grave and dispassionate pages of history accusations of so serious a nature, affecting as well the moral and political character of Lorenzo as the fidelity and correctness of his biographer, he ought to have been much better prepared with authorities to support his charges than appears, from any thing on the face of his own works, to have been the case. A few words will suffice to shew the truth or falsehood of these weighty charges, and will demonstrate that this attempt to attach to Lorenzo de' Medici the character of a remorseless and sanguinary tyrant, affects not only the veracity of M. de Sismondi, but his judgment and discretion as an historian. In fact, he has exhibited such a disgraceful ig-

(*a*) "Laurent pursuivoit presque toujours une politique tout égoïste; il soutint par des exécutions sanglantes un pouvoir usurpé; il appesantit chaque jour un joug détesté sur une ville libre; il enleva aux magistrats légitimes l'autorité que leur donnoit la constitution, et il détourna ses concitoyens de cette carrière publique, dans laquelle, avant lui, ils avoient développé tant de talens."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 369.

norance of the state of society in Florence, during the latter period of the life of Lorenzo de' Medici, as must deprive his representations not only of all credit, but of all probability.

M. de Sismondi seems to have thought that he might hazard a general charge, although he could not produce a particular instance; and that if he could not support it by positive proof, it could not, on the other hand, be positively contradicted. But unfortunately for him, his account not only admits of refutation, but he is himself the person who has adduced the most ample evidence that his charges cannot possibly be true. M. de Sismondi has repeatedly stated, that under the influence of Lorenzo, "the affairs of Florence were deprived of all movement and all interest;" that "its annals are a blank;" and that "the administration of many of its Gonfaloniers passed on without having been marked by a single event."(a) What then becomes of the bloody executions, which M. de Sismondi so positively informs us took place? Who were the victims? or what were the grounds, or the pretexts, of their death? M. de Sismondi ought to have known, that at this period the city of Florence was at the height of its population and its splendor; that many of

(a) *v. ante p.* 166, *note* (a).

its citizens were men of high public spirit and great literary acquirements, several of whom have left their chronicles of the events of the times; and that such was the attention paid to every political movement in that city, that the slightest incident would have been recorded by them with the utmost minuteness. What then would have been said, if the citizens of Florence had been dragged from their homes, as M. de Sismondi would induce us to believe, to a public execution? Would it not have disturbed the tranquillity of the Florentine annals, and have resounded throughout all Italy? When Neri de' Cambi was deprived of his authority *(ammonito)*, for having as Gonfalonier exercised an act of severity on some inferior magistrates, without the assent or knowledge of the *Otto di pratica*, or chief executive power of the state, this incident was considered of such importance as to have been recorded by the chronicles of the time, and particularly by Giovanni Cambi, the son of the Gonfalonier, and imputed to the undue interference of Lorenzo; although it appears not to have been the act of any individual, but of the magistrates at large, "whose authority," we are told, "was at that time very great in Florence."(a) But if a trans-

(a) *v. Ammirato, lib.* xxv. *tom.* iii. *p.* 133.

action of this nature gave rise to animadversion, what would have been the consequence if Lorenzo had, of his own authority, and at his own risk, put to death a citizen of Florence? If there be any credit due to the representations given by Guicciardini of the tranquillity not only of that state, but of all Italy at this period, the statement of M. de Sismondi cannot be true. (*a*) But it is perhaps of still more importance on this subject to resort to the testimony of Macchiavelli, who asserts, that from the termination of the war of Sarzana, (in 1487), to the death of Lorenzo, (in 1492), the Florentines enjoyed the highest state of felicity; (*b*) nor, if we except the unfortunate events in which Lorenzo was, in the earlier part of his life, involved by the crimes of others, and which occasioned the death of the perpetrators, have I been able to discover, nor can M. de Sismondi produce any other instance, in which a citizen of Florence was put to death for a political offence, during the time that Lorenzo was considered as chief of the republic.

(*a*) *v. Life of Lorenzo de' Med.* 4°. *ed. vol.* ii. *p.* 47. 8°. *ed. p.* 61.

(*b*) "I Fiorentini, finita la guerra di Serezana, vissero infino al 1492, che Lorenzo de' Medici morì, in una felicità grandissima."—*Macch. Hist. lib.* viii.

Disregarding then these calumnious imputations as unworthy of further notice, I shall only observe that the other assertion of M. de Sismondi, that I have dissimulated or concealed the resentful spirit of the Florentines against Lorenzo, is equally void of foundation; and that on the contrary, there is no instance on record in which an individual, acting in a high and public character, has succeeded in conciliating the friendship and attachment of those around him in a greater degree. From what incident in the life of Lorenzo can M. de Sismondi discover or infer this animosity of the citizens of Florence against Lorenzo? Was it displayed on the conspiracy of the Pazzi, when the resentment of the populace against the assassins was roused to such a pitch, that according to his own expression, "*their frantic thirst of vengeance seemed as if it would never have been appeased?*" Was it exhibited on the return of Lorenzo from Naples, where at the hazard of his life he had accomplished a treaty which relieved the republic from the most imminent danger, and was received by his fellow-citizens "*as the saviour of his country?*"(a) Was it, when after having restored the state of Florence to such a degree of prosperity and repose, as to give M. de

(a) *Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 102, 186.

Sismondi reason to complain that it afforded no materials for the bloody page of history, Lorenzo partook with his fellow-citizens in those delightful amusements to which they so universally devoted themselves? When the compositions of the Pulci, of Politiano, and even of Lorenzo himself, were chanted with rapture by an admiring and delighted populace? Or, lastly, was it at the moment of the death of Lorenzo that we are to seek for the hatred and resentment of his fellow-citizens? An event which was not only lamented by his friends in an unexampled degree, but overwhelmed his country with the utmost grief, and extorted the regrets and condolence of the other states of Italy and even of Europe? "No man," says Macchiavelli, "ever died, not merely in the city of Florence, but in any part of Italy, with such a reputation for prudence, or whose loss occasioned so much sorrow to his country."(*a*)

Were we to seek for the causes of the constant and invariable attachment of the citizens of Florence to Lorenzo de' Medici, we should

(*a*) "Ne morì mai alcuno, non solamente in Firenze, ma in Italia con tanta fama di prudenza, ne chè tanto alla sua patria dolesse."—*Macch. Hist. lib.* viii.

find them not merely in the high estimation in which he was held for the promptitude, magnanimity, and discretion of his public conduct on the most important occasions, but also in his affability and kindness in all the relations of private life; in the continual intercourse he maintained with all ranks of people, and the readiness he shewed to alleviate their misfortunes and to participate in their grief. Of this I shall lay before the reader an additional proof, in a letter, not before published, from him to Giovanni Lanfredini, the Florentine ambassador at Rome, whose son Orsino died on the twenty-second of November, 1488, very soon after his marriage. (*a*) Lanfredini did not long survive his loss, having died in the following year at Rome, where he was interred in the same chapel with his son.

"*Lorenzo de' Medici to Giovanni Lanfredini, the Florentine ambassador at Rome.*

"I have heard with great sorrow of the death of your Son, which has affected me the more, as

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(*a*) Of the cause of his death and the particulars of his funeral, a singular account is given by Burchard, in his MS. Diary of the transactions of the Roman Courts in the above year.

I had not before been informed of his indisposition. If I did not know your magnanimity, and that you were accustomed to bear both evil and good, I should make use of more words than I shall do at present, in attempting to console you, by referring you to many misfortunes which I have myself supported, and which are well known to you. However this may be, I must intreat you to reconcile your mind to the dispensation of God, especially as your Son is rather to be envied than lamented; nor will there be wanting to you and all yours who yet remain, friends and connexions who will consider your concerns as their own. I, in particular, as well from the sympathy I feel for you, as on account of your long fidelity and affection in my concerns, shall always be to you such as your own kindness to me, and the duty of a grateful person require; nor do I doubt that, under all circumstances, your honour and interest will still be maintained. Would it were as much in my power to restore to you your Son, whom God has judged fit to take to himself. Console yourself, Giovanni; exert your resolution, and hope in God and in your friends, who never will desert you.

" LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

" *Flor.* 18 *Jan.* 1488 (9)."

XXVII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 45. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 59.

"*From Matteo (Mattia) Corvino, whose virtues had raised him to the throne of Hungary, many letters, addressed to Lorenzo, are yet extant, which demonstrate not only the warm attachment of that monarch to the cause of science and the arts, but his esteem and veneration for the man whom he considered as their most zealous protector.*"

I AM happy to have it in my power to lay before the reader a copy of one of these Letters, extracted from the original, preserved in the records of the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence. (*a*)

(*a*) *Appendix, No.* XVIII.

XXVIII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 51. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 67.

"*In tracing the history of the revival and progress of the ancient languages, we shall find, that as they were influenced by other causes, they neither flourished nor declined with the study of the national tongue. On the contrary, a daily proficiency was made in classical literature at the very time that the Italian language was again sinking into barbarism and neglect; and the former advanced by a gradual but certain progress, towards that perfection which the latter suddenly and unexpectedly attained; from the causes to which we have before adverted.*"

On this passage Pignotti remarks that the author of the English Life of Lorenzo has stated, "*probably from an extreme attachment to the family of the Medici,*" that "after the death of Boccaccio, literature fell into a state of languor, from which it was not roused, but by the members of that house." "If," adds Pignotti, "he speaks of the Tuscan tongue, he is perfectly in the right; but this is not the case with the

other branches of literature, as is demonstrated by numerous facts."(a) He then enters on an inquiry to shew, that from the death of Boccaccio to the end of the fifteenth century, the studies of classical literature made a progressive improvement; alleging the examples of Coluccio Salutati, Leonardo Bruni, Poggio Bracciolini, and other learned men of the time.

In justice to myself I am compelled to observe, that before M. Pignotti had decided on my motives, he ought to have established the facts on which they are assumed. If, as he admits, I have been right in attributing the revival of *Italian* literature to the Medici, (which however I have not *exclusively* done), why should this be charged against me *as an undue partiality towards that family?* And again, why should M. Pignotti have given his readers to understand that I had confounded together the restorers of Italian, and classical literature,

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(a) " Il celebre autore inglese della vita di Lorenzo il Magnifico, probabilmente *per un soverchio attaccamento alla Famiglia Medicea,* vuole che le lettere, dopo la morte de Boccaccio, cadessero nel languore, e onde non fossero fatte resorgere che dalla Casa Medici. Se si tratta della lingua toscana, *ha tutta la ragione,* come si è fatto vedere a suo luogo; ma non già degli *altri generi di letteratura;* ciocchè è dimostrato da molti fatti."—*Pign. Storia di Toscana, tom.* ix. *Saggio* ii. *p.* 2.

when he must have perceived, in the very passage of my work to which he refers, that I had anticipated the distinction which he has so formally announced, between the different progress of Italian and classical studies; and that I had attributed the proficiency in the *latter* not to the Medici, but to the same causes, and even the same persons, as he has himself done, under the semblance of detecting an undue partiality on my part, and developing a novel discovery of his own?

XXIX.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 65. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 86.

"*Landino was one of the first scholars who, after the revival of letters, devoted himself to the important task of restoring and elucidating these favorite* (classical) *authors, and his labours were received with unbounded applause.*"

THE remains of Landino lay unburied in the church of Borgo alla Collina in Casentino; but a monument was erected for him in 1803, by Cardinal Despuig, on which are inscribed the following lines by Pignotti:—

" Di Dante, di Maron, del Venusino
Quel che seppe spiegar gli alti pensieri
Miralo, passeggiar; questo è LANDINO,
D' Ovidio emulò i versi lusinghieri;
Destò nel gran LORENZO estro divino,
Dopo tre scorsi omai Secoli interi.
Incorrotto lo vedi anco il suo frale;
Par che natura fatto abbia immortale."

v. Moreni, Bib. Stor. Ragion. della Toscana, tom. i. p. 73.

XXX.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 92.

" *Pico neither enjoyed nor had any pretensions to the sovereignty* (of Mirandula and Concordia), *which, after the death of his father, devolved on his elder brother Galeotto, and afterwards on his nephew Giovan-Francesco.*"

ALTHOUGH such was the hereditary succession of the family of Pico, yet in stating that Giovanni, (the celebrated Pico of Mirandula), had no pretensions to the sovereignty, I had fallen into an error, which has been avoided in the subsequent editions of my work. Gian-Francesco, the sovereign of those states, had three sons, Galeotto, Antonmaria, and Giovanni; to whom, according to the frequent practice of the

middle ages, he left his dominions; and the title of all the three brothers was confirmed by the emperor Frederic in 1460, and afterwards by Maximilian I. The rights which Giovanni thus possessed, he transferred to his nephew Gian-Francesco, the eldest son of Galeotto, as appears from the original document preserved in the ducal archives of Modena, in which he commemorates his claims, and transfers *his third part of those states with all their privileges* to his nephew in fee. (*a*)

Of the troubles which Gian-Francesco, the nephew, experienced in maintaining his authority, and the fatal termination of it by the sanguinary hands of his nephew Galeotto, the son of his brother Lodovico, who had in his lifetime repeatedly driven him from his dominions, some account is given in the Life of Leo X. (*b*)

To enter into an examination of the long disquisition in which Pozzetti has engaged, in order to justify the proceedings of the Roman court, respecting the propositions of Pico on ethics, physics, mathematics, and theology,

(*a*) *Tiraboschi Memoire Storiche Modenese, tom.* iv. *p.* 193. *Pozzetti Dissert.* ii. *p.* 66.

(*b*) Vol. iv. p. 105, &c.

offered by him for general disputation, would lead us too far from our more immediate subject; and I shall therefore beg leave to refer the reader to the judicious observations of Count Bossi, in reply to Pozzetti, at the close of the present volume, and to the valuable Memoirs of Joannes Picus of Mirandula, and others, by the Rev. W. P. Greswell. (*a*)

XXXI.

v. 4to. ed. vol. i. p. 108. 8vo. ed. vol. i. p. 147.

"*To the authors before mentioned we may add the names of Cantalicio, Nicodemo Folengi, Alessandro Braccio, and Aurelio Augurelli; all of whom have cultivated Latin poetry, with different degrees of success, and have addressed some portion of their works to Lorenzo de' Medici.*"

Besides the pieces above referred to, I am now enabled to state, that a collection of poems intitled Lauretum, and written in honour of Lo-

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(*a*) *Memoirs of Angelus Politianus, Joannes Picus of Mirandula, Actius Sincerus Sannazarius, &c. Manch.* 1805, 2*d ed. p.* 228.

renzo, was formed by Minervi Severo of Spoleto, and was published, after the death of Lorenzo, in quarto, without the name of the printer; but Bandini, in his annals of the Giunti press, conjectures that it was printed by the Giunti in Florence, in 1516. The contributors to this volume, besides the collector, were "Madalio da Cortona, Bartolommeo Reguleo, Clemente Bancozzi, Andrea Dazzi, Lodovico Alamanni, Tanai et Antonio de' Nerli, Donato Gianotto, Pieri Francesco Portinari, Cristoforo Sernisi, Alessio Lapaccini, Gasparo da Figline, Francesco Zeffi, Carlo Viviani, Agostino da Faenza e Basilio Lancillotto ambedue Serviti, Alessandro Rosselli, e Lorenzo delle Ripomarance." From the great number of contributors to this collection, many of whom are known by their other productions, we may be enabled to judge in some degree, of the earnestness with which Latin poetry was cultivated in Italy at the close of the 15th century, and of the high character which Lorenzo had obtained throughout the whole of that country. The collection terminates with a letter from Carlo Aldobrandi to Lorenzo de' Medici, in which may be found some account of the editor. (*a*)

(*a*) "Homo, ut scis, non minus doctus quam strenuus, præstare, conatus hoc ipso tempore alioqui ociosus, ex variis

XXXII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 133. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 181.

"*His own engagements yet remained incomplete; but whilst he was endeavouring, from his large property and extensive concerns, to discharge the demands against him, a decree, providing for the payment of his debts out of the public treasury, relieved him from his difficulties, and proved that the affection of his fellow-citizens yet remained unimpaired.*"

NOTHING can shew the prejudice and injustice of M. de Sismondi against the character of Lorenzo de' Medici in a stronger light than the manner in which he relates the transactions

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musarum locis *Lauretum* congessit. Quod quidem haud frondibus aut baccis, sed multis tuarum laudum præconiis perpetuo vireat; sibique æternum cum ingenti fideique suæ, tum vero amplitudinis tuæ, ac gloria posteris monumentum. Vale, Patrone optime, tuosque Minervium et Aldobrandum tui nominis studiosos, benigno felicitatis sinu exceptos felix complectere."—*Moreni Bibliogr. Storico-Ragion. di Toscana, tom.* ii. *p.* 82.

above referred to, which he considers as intirely occasioned by the extravagance and misconduct of Lorenzo and his agents, "who," says he, "regarded themselves as the ministers of a prince; displayed upon their counters a ridiculous luxury; and united negligence to prodigality. The splendid fortune which Cosmo had left to his grandson was dissipated by this senseless luxury; but, for a long time, the obligations of the receivers of the republic covered the deficiency which the transactions of the bank occasioned. All the revenues of the state were absorbed by these anticipations. They had passed intirely through the hands of the agents of the Medici, and they were dissipated like the property of the House itself, before it was even perceived." (*a*)

(*a*) "Laurent de Médici toujours engagé dans le commerce, qu'il ne pratiquoit lui-même, et qu'il n'entendoit point, avoit remit ses affaires à des commis et à des agens établis dans diverses places de l' Europe. Ceux ci se regardoient comme les ministres d'un prince; ils etaloient dans leurs comptoirs un luxe ridicule, et ils unissoient la négligence à la prodigalité. La fortune brillante que Cosmo avoit laissée à ses petits-fils, fut dissipé, par ce luxe insensé; mais pendant long-tems les obligations des receveurs de la république couvirent le vide que laissoient les opérations de banque. Tous les revenus de l'etat étoient distrait par ces anticipations; ils avoient passé tous entières entre les mains des commis de la maison

That great sums of money had been expended, and that the agents of Lorenzo had incurred considerable losses, and involved him in difficulties, may readily be allowed; but to pretend that the debts for which he had to provide were wholly to be attributed to the extravagance, folly, and luxury of himself and his agents, is manifestly unjust. In enumerating the causes of these difficulties, two circumstances present themselves, which it is impossible that any person who aspires to the character of an impartial historian, could have overlooked. The first of these is the immense sums of money which Lorenzo and his ancestors were constantly in the habit of expending, in the erection of buildings, and the carrying on of public works for the accommodation and embellishment of the city; and which, from the time of Cosmo to the year 1471, amounted to the enormous sum of 663,755 florins, as appears from accounts preserved in the records of his family. (*a*) That this expenditure was

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de Medici, et ils étoient dissipés comme les restes de la fortune de cette maison, avant même d'avoir été perçus."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 347, 348.

(*a*) *v. Life of Lor. de' Medici, Appendix, No.* xii.

greatly increased during the life of Lorenzo is evident, from the works as well for religious as other purposes, which he himself completed, and the collections he formed for the promotion of literature and of art, and which might at least have served as an exception to the charge against Lorenzo, of having dissipated his patrimony in senseless luxury. But there is another circumstance, perhaps of still greater importance, and which may serve to demonstrate that the conduct of the magistrates of the republic, which M. de Sismondi seems to consider as a decided proof of their subserviency to his authority, was only an act of justice. In the course of the negociations and wars in which the republic had been engaged, both Lorenzo and his ancestors had expended a great portion of their private patrimony. Fabroni justly remarks, that it was by this liberality of Lorenzo that the chief leaders of Italy were engaged in the service of the Florentines, conceiving, says that author, that it was his duty to repay to his country what he had received from his country. Even M. de Sismondi himself, on another occasion, allows that Lorenzo was not sparing of his own property, when he conceived it could be employed for the benefit or the honour of his country. "Magnificence," says he, "was in his politics as much as in his character. He loved to give an idea of infinite wealth, in order to enhance

the opinion of his power. He never measured his pomp by his revenues. During his stay at Naples, after a long war, *ruinous both to his country and himself*, he sometimes distributed portions to young women from Appulia and Calabria, and sometimes displayed before the eyes of the Neapolitans, in his purchases, his equipages, and attendants, a parade of wealth which was by no means real. His object was always to astonish and to dazzle." (*a*).

Although nothing can be more inconsistent with the character of Lorenzo de' Medici than the foregoing passage, yet it may serve to demonstrate, that the wars in which the Florentines were engaged, had at least contributed to bring on the embarrassments in question, and that Lorenzo was by no means sparing of his purse, when he conceived it could be devoted

(*a*) " La magnificence étoit dans sa politique autant que dans son caractère ; il aimoit à donner l'idée d'une richesse infinie, pour rehausser ainsi l'opinion qu'on avoit de son pouvoir ; il ne mesuroit jamais son faste sur ses revenus ; pendant son sejour à Naples, après une guerre ruineuse pour sa patrie comme pour lui, tantôt il avoit distribué des dots à une foule de jeunes femmes de Pouille et de Calabre, tantôt il avoit déployé aux yeux des Napolitains, dans ses achats, dans sa suite, dans ses equipages, toute la pompe d'une richesse qui n'avoit plus de réel : toujours il avoit voulu étonner et éblouir."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 187.

to the benefit or the honour of his country. That Lorenzo must have had higher claims on the gratitude of the republic than such as M. de Sismondi allows, is certain; as otherwise it would be wholly impossible to account for this striking instance of the affection of his fellow-citizens; and it is greatly to be regretted that Mr. Hallam should have relied so implicitly on the unfounded representations of M. de Sismondi, on this, as well as on other occasions. (*a*)

XXXIII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 126. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 171.

"*Politiano continued his correspondence with Lorenzo, and occasionally addressed himself to his mother, Madonna Lucretia, between whom and this eminent scholar there subsisted a friendly and confidential intercourse.*"

To the instances of this correspondence given in the Life of Lorenzo, I am now enabled to

(*a*) *v. View of Europe during the Middle Ages*, 8°. *ed. vol.* i. *p.* 544.

add another letter of that celebrated scholar, hitherto unpublished; from which it appears that she had intrusted him with the perusal of her *Laudi*, or hymns, and sonnets; and that he considered her as the most powerful promoter of his interests with her son Lorenzo. (*a*)

XXXIV.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 166. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 224.

"*Lorenzo de' Medici has not escaped the imputation of having been privy to the assassination of his old and implacable adversary (Girolamo Riario); but neither the relations of contemporary historians, nor the general tenor of his life, afford a presumption on which to ground such an accusation.*"

NOTWITHSTANDING the decisive evidence already given by the publication of the letter of Lodovico and Cecco d'Orsi, two of the conspirators, every word of which demonstrates that Lorenzo was not privy to this treacherous trans-

(*a*) *v. Appendix, No.* XIX.

action, (*a*) M. de Sismondi has thought proper to renew the accusation; and has pretended to consider this event as "the consequence of the intrigues of Lorenzo de' Medici, and of the resentment of a person who, throughout a long course of years, had endeavoured to gratify his vengeance for an old offence." (*b*)

Had M. de Sismondi intended to do justice to the character of Lorenzo, he would not have decided so positively on this transaction, without giving the evidence respecting it a further consideration. For this the materials were not wanting. It had been already observed, in the Life of Lorenzo, that the candid and judicious Fabroni had expressed himself on this subject in such a manner as to give weight and credit to a charge, which, if established, would degrade the character of Lorenzo to that of a treacherous assassin. Against his remarks I

(*a*) *v. Life of Lorenzo de' Med. Appendix, No.* LXXXI.

(*b*) "Dans cet intervalle de paix générale pour l'Italie, les républiques ne furent pas seules à éprouver des révolutions intestines; les petites principautés furent à leur tour troublées par des conjurations, et l'on crut reconnoître dans celles qui éclatèrent en Romagne, en 1488, la conséquence des intrigues de Laurent de' Medicis, et le ressentiment d'un homme qui poursuivoit, après des longues années, la vengeance des vieilles offences."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* XI. *p.* 308.

had offered such a vindication as I conceived to be decisive, and had referred to such authors as had fallen under my notice. As M. de Sismondi has not thought it necessary to advert to these considerations, I shall here appeal to another authority, that of M. Pignotti, the latest historian of Tuscany, who, in referring to this event has examined both the passage in Fabroni, and the refutation which I had brought forwards, and had not only decided against the accusation, but given additional proof of the futility of such a charge. "The Count Girolamo Riario," says he, "had frequently attempted the Life of Lorenzo both by treachery and open force. It was, therefore, natural to expect that, in those days of crime, some suspicions should have arisen that he had a share in the offence; and yet no one had then the slightest idea of it; nor can it be conceived how a modern writer of the Life of Lorenzo, (Monsig. Fabroni,) could revive such an imputation, for which, however, he has been justly animadverted on by the English historian, to whom he has not been able to reply."(a) He then

(a) "Eppure niuna allora ebbe il più piccolo sospetto; nè si sa come uno scrittore moderno della Vita di Lorenzo (Monsignor Fabbroni) abbia voluto risvegliarlo; ma n'è con ragione riprese dall' Inglese Istorico, a cui non ho potuto replicare."—*Pignotti.*

proceeds to justify Lorenzo as follows. "The grand character and generous mind of this man, who was incapable of so abominable a crime, may be cleared from every shadow of suspicion, by authentic documents, from which we discover that the assassins had no connection whatever with Lorenzo." He then refers to the letter from the Orsi to Lorenzo before noticed, and to another letter from Stefano da Castrocaro, published by Fabroni; from the first of which, says he, "it appears that, after the fact, the conspirators had recourse to Lorenzo for his assistance, not as an instigator or accomplice, but as a person to whom they supposed this transaction had rendered a service." "This fact," he adds, "appears more clearly from the letter of Castrocaro to Lorenzo, where, in stating in what manner the conspirators determined on the deed, he destroys all suspicion of instigation. Their reasons, or their pretexts, were, that, being no longer able to exist at Forli, and in constant fear of their own lives, they came to a determination to assassinate Riario. Cecco meeting Lodovico, said to him, '*If I had a companion of my own mind, I would make you laugh;*' to which the other replied, '*You may have two, if you wish it,*' &c. The whole serves to free Lorenzo from all suspicion. Raffaelle da Volterra, an enemy of Lorenzo, and a contemporary writer, would not have failed to have

expatiated on this article: his silence is a fresh proof; as well as that of Mich. Brutus. Finally, it may be observed, that if the death of the Count had been projected by Lorenzo, to effect a change in the government, the attempt would have been supported by the Florentine troops." (*a*)

XXXV.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 204. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 278.

"*From this time till the death of Lorenzo, which included an interval of four years, Michelagnolo constantly resided in the palace of the Medici, and sat at the table of Lorenzo, amongst his most honoured guests.*"

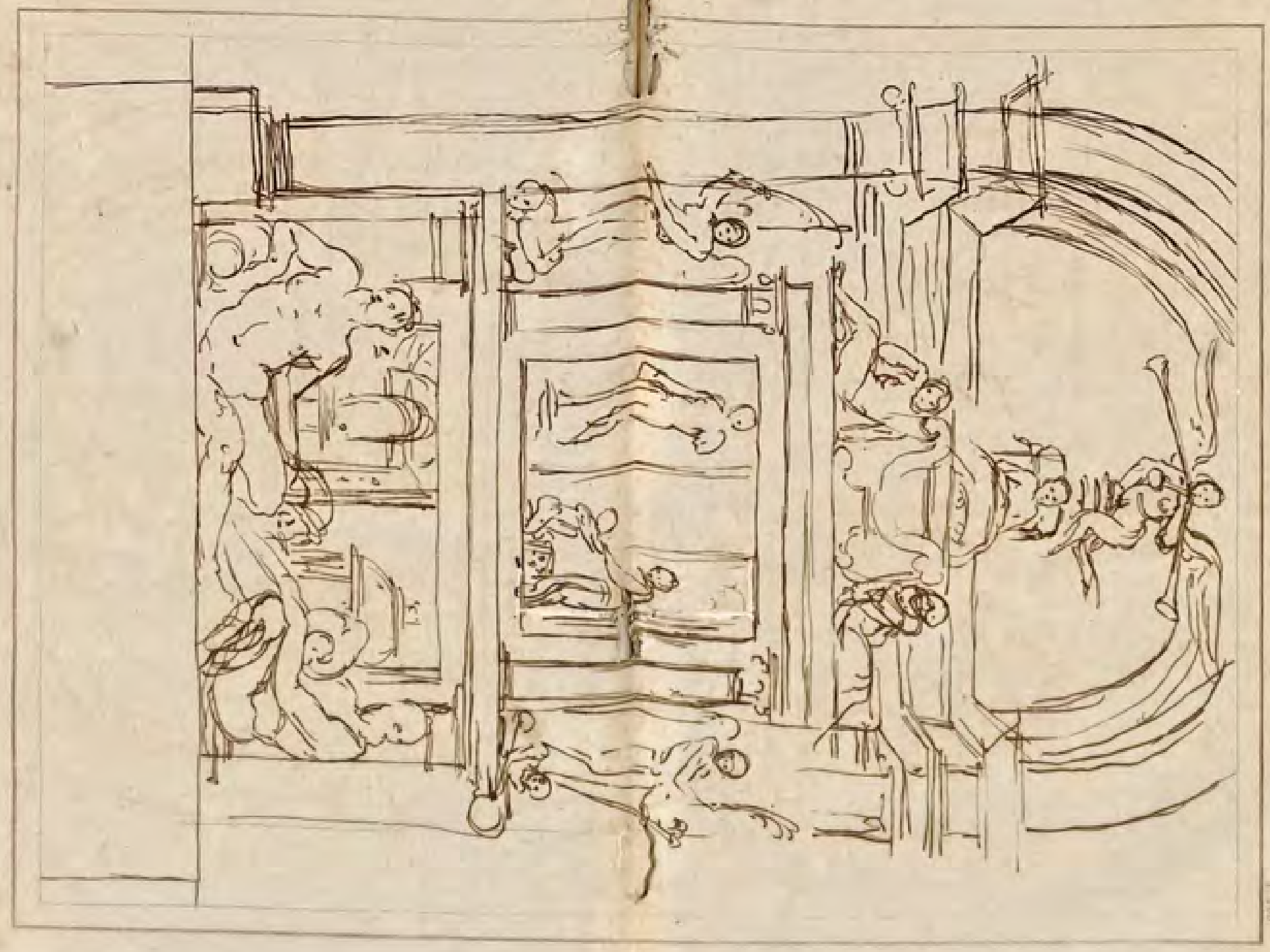
MICHELAGNOLO was born in 1474, and according to Condivi, was between fifteen and sixteen years of age, when he went to reside in the Palace of the Medici, where he remained till the death of Lorenzo, in 1492; consequently his residence there could not much have exceeded

(*a*) *v. Pignotti Storia di Toscano, tom.* vi. *p.* 255, 256.

two years, or *intorno a due anni*, as Condivi expressly states. Of the works which he executed, at this early period of his life, some account has been given; and to these may be added the bust of Lorenzo, a representation of which forms the frontispiece to the present volume, and which cannot be mistaken for the work of any other hand. For this precious memorial, I am indebted to the kindness and liberality of the Marquis Capponi, of Florence, in whose illustrious family the *terra cotta* bust of Michelagnolo has remained to the present times, and who has transmitted me a fine cast from the original, for which I am happy here to express my grateful acknowledgments. That this bust was executed in the latter period of the life of Lorenzo, is sufficiently evident from the appearance of the features, which betray the ravages of indisposition, but by no means deprive it of that dignity of character which none but the hand of Michelagnolo could so strikingly have expressed.

Whilst engaged on this subject, I cannot deprive myself of the opportunity of adverting to another memorial, which combines the memory of the great artist with that of his first patron. On the death of Michelagnolo, his obsequies were celebrated in the church of San Lorenzo, at Florence, in the presence of the Grand Duke,

and all the nobility of the city; on which occasion an immense Catalfalco, emblematic of his character and life, was erected in the body of the church, consisting of sculpture and painting by the hands of his disciples, and of which a very particular account is given by Vasari. This temporary monument, after being suffered to remain a short period for public inspection, was intirely destroyed. It is, therefore, with pleasure I lay before the public a copy of the original sketch for the principal front of this temporary structure, which varies in some respects from the description of Vasari, as a first sketch might be expected to do, but sufficiently agrees in the most important particulars, and especially in the principal subject, where Lorenzo de' Medici is represented as introducing Michelagnolo to the study of sculpture in his gardens at Florence. The Tiber, with a view of St. Peter's, and the Arno, with a view of the Laurentian library, form the base of the structure; and the piece is terminated by the figure of fame blowing three trumpets, in allusion to his threefold merits as a painter, sculptor, and architect. The statue of the Tiber, of colossal size, was by Giovanni da Castello; and that of the Arno by Battista da Benedetto; the picture of Lorenzo and Michelagnolo was painted in *chiaro scuro* by Mirabello and Girolamo del Crocifissajo.



This spirited sketch was in the collection of Mr. Ottley, where it was considered as the design of Michelagnolo for his own monument; but it is, more probably, the work of the sculptor Zanobi Lastricati, who was appointed provveditore, or superintendant of the Catafalco, of which this memorial is all that now remains.

On one of the sides of the monument was the following inscription:

COLLEGIUM PICTORUM STATUARIORUM ARCHITECTORUM AUSPICIO OPEQUE SIBI PROMPTA COSMI DUCIS AUCTORIS SUORUM COMMODORUM. SUSPICIENS SINGULAREM VIRTUTEM MICHAELIS ANGELI BONARROTAE, INTELLIGENSQUE QUANTO SIBI AUXILIO SEMPER FUERINT PRAECLARA IPSIUS OPERA. STUDUITQUE SE GRATUM ERGA ILLUM OSTENDERE. SUMMUM OMNIUM QUI UNQUAM FUERINT P. S. A. IDEOQUE MONUMENTUM HOC SUIS MANIBUS EXTRUCTUM MAGNO ANIMI ARDORE IPSIUS MEMORIAE DEDICAVIT.

XXXVI.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 241. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 328.

"*On all sides, he touched the extremes of human character, and the powers of his mind were only bounded by that impenetrable circle which prescribes the limits of human nature.*"

Not satisfied with endeavouring to deprive Lorenzo de' Medici of his character as a statesman, M. de Sismondi has attempted also to diminish his reputation in poetry, in philosophy, and in art; contending that he is not perhaps to be considered as a superior person in any of these departments, and founding his merits merely on the assistance he afforded to others, to whose proficiency he is indebted for an essential part of his reputation.(*a*) In what manner M.

(*a*) "Quelleque fût l'habilité de Laurent de Médicis dans les affaires, ce n'est pas comme homme d'état qu'il peut-être placé au rang des plus grands hommes dont l'Italié se glorifie.

"Laurent n'étoit point peut-être un homme superieur, ni comme poète ni comme philosophe, ni comme artiste; mais

de Sismondi proposes to reconcile the representations here given with the character he has drawn of Lorenzo in another work, (*a*) it is not easy to say. If Lorenzo de' Medici was the first to whom we may attribute the revival of Italian poetry after its long depression, how can we refuse to consider him as a superior person in that department? and if his acquirements in philosophy, in letters, and in arts, were such as are there represented, how shall we satisfy ourselves with attributing to him a secondary merit, reflected from the talents and genius of others?(*b*) That as long as he lived he preserved his country in peace, and retarded the calamities with which it was overwhelmed two years after his death, is a spontaneous assertion of M. de Sismondi which we have seen him contradict in the strongest terms; but that he should have carried his prejudices so far as to attempt to deprive Lorenzo of the honourable

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il avoit un sentiment si vif du beau et dù juste, qu'il mettoit sur la voie ceux *qu'il ne pouvoit pas suivre lui-même.* Aussi les profondeurs des pensées de Politien, et de Pic de la Mirandole, le genie poetique de Marulle et des Pulci, l'erudition de Landino, de Scala, et de Ficino, font-elles une partie essentielle de la gloire du protecteur auquel ils durent presque l'existence." —*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 369, 370.

(*a*) *Litterature du Midi de l'Europe.*

(*b*) *v. ante, p.* 141, 142.

station to which he had exalted him, to deny his individual and personal accomplishments, and to degrade him altogether from the rank of a great man, is an assumption of despotic authority in matters of taste, to which it may be doubted whether the public will implicitly submit, and an indication of weakness and instability as to the grounds of his opinions, which must unavoidably lead us to distrust them on other occasions.

Instead, however, of pretending to examine into the motives of M. de Sismondi for this versatility, or attempting to balance against each other the exact amount or value of his praise or blame, I shall on the present occasion only observe, that whether Lorenzo de' Medici was or was not a great man, he is by far the most important personage in that portion of the history of M. de Sismondi, which includes the period of his life—that he commences the volume with the birth of Lorenzo, that he terminates it with his death, and distinguishes him by drawing his character, an honour which he has not conferred on any other individual of the age. Either therefore Lorenzo de' Medici was a great man, or the eleventh volume of the History of the Italian Republics in the middle ages must be considered as a fable.

XXXVII.

4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 242. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 330.

"*It was not by the continuance, but by the dereliction of the system that he had established, that the Florentine republic sunk under the degrading yoke of foreign power; and to his premature death we may unquestionably attribute, not only the destruction of the commonwealth, but all the calamities that Italy soon afterwards sustained.*"

In order to counteract the efforts so industriously made by M. de Sismondi to involve the elder members of the family of the Medici in the fifteenth century, in one common censure with their successors in the sixteenth, as the enemies of public liberty, and the subjugators of their country, it would be necessary to advert more particularly to a period when a series of events that had been continued through several generations seems to have arrived at its termination, and to have given way to a new succession, founded on a new basis, and influenced by occurrences wholly different from any thing that had before taken place. This period

was that of the death of Lorenzo, and the descent of Charles VIII. into Italy. Whatever were the merits or demerits of Lorenzo and his ancestors, whether their public measures or private conduct were favourable or unfavourable to the liberties and happiness of their country, that event brought them to an instantaneous and final determination. Not only was the temporary and conciliating policy of the family discontinued, but a course of conduct directly the reverse was adopted; and the folly and impetuosity of Piero de' Medici, combining with the political profligacy of Lodovico Sforza, produced such an alteration in the affairs of Italy, as it is impossible to refer to any antecedent councils or events; nor can it be, either with truth or plausibility contended, that the important revolutions and sanguinary events which took place in Italy from the death of Lorenzo to the establishment of the Grand Duchy, a period of upwards of forty years, were either in theory contemplated, or in fact produced by a succession of individuals whose first maxim it was, never to assume an authority that was not conceded by the will of a free and independent people.

This total change in the aspect of the affairs of Italy, and indeed of Europe, is admitted by Sismondi himself, who whilst he contends that

Lorenzo de' Medici laid the foundation of the future subjugation of his country, has not scrupled to state, with a strange inconsistency, that after the death of Lorenzo a new series of events commenced, when the ancient order of things underwent an inevitable change; when force and violence were alone resorted to; when the armies of the European powers were increased tenfold, more destructive modes of war adopted, and the liberties of all the smaller states were successively destroyed.(*a*) In short, that it did not depend on the genius of any man to hasten or retard a crisis which the nature of things had rendered necessary. Is it then allowable for M. de Sismondi to blow hot and cold with the same breath? and are we to believe, that in this universal and acknowledged change, the measures adopted by Lorenzo de' Medici for destroying the liberties of his country were the only causes that still continued to operate? or may we not with much greater probability presume that Florence, being de-

(*a*) "L'Espagne, la France, l'Allemagne, l'Angleterre, alloient arriver sur le champ de bataille, comme des Colosses, avec lesquels les puissances qui jusque alors avoient cru tenir la balance de l'Europe, ne seroient plus en état de lutter. Le temps étoient venu, ou l'ancien ordre des choses devoit changer; la liberté des petits peuples s'étoit successivement anéanti," &c.—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 359.

prived of the prompt decision and judicious councils of Lorenzo de' Medici, was compelled to follow the fate of the smaller governments to which Sismondi refers, and that the destruction of her liberties is to be attributed to events which did not take place till after the death of Lorenzo?

It is therefore contradictory and absurd in M. de Sismondi, no less than unjust, to impute the subsequent calamities of Italy, and the overthrow of the liberties of his country, to the ambition of Lorenzo de' Medici. (*a*) Nor can he be permitted to maintain the inconsistent charges into which he has been led by his hostility to the character of Lorenzo; and after having contended that his efforts could neither hasten nor retard the course of events, and the crisis that took place, to represent him as having produced effects of the utmost importance to his country at so great a distance of time after his death. We may therefore still be allowed

(*a*) "Nous verrons dans la dernière partie de cet ouvrage, les conséquences funestes de son ambition, et du renversement des institutions nationales. Une lutte desastreuse se perpétua pendant trent-huit ans entre la famille de Laurent et sa patrie, et elle ne se termina que par l'etablissement de la tyrannie d'Alexandre de' Medicis."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 369.

to concur in the uniform opinion of both contemporary and subsequent writers, that it was not to the misconduct of Lorenzo whilst living, but to the untimely event of his death, that the subsequent calamities of Italy are to be referred. Nor has this opinion wanted the support of the more recent historians of the Tuscan state. Galuzzi, in his celebrated history of the ducal house of Medici, before entering on his principal subject, has dismissed the elder chiefs of the family, terminating with Lorenzo, with the following remarks:

" Thus ended the government of the republic in the house of Medici, which having been prepared by the prudence of Giovanni de' Bicci, was effectually consolidated by Cosmo in 1434, and continued for sixty years in his successors, till 1494. The maxims of this government were to equalize the nobility and the populace, and to maintain the independence of the citizens. All the affairs were administered under the authority of the magistrates, *and the Medici assumed to themselves no other power than such as was accorded to them by the homage and opinion of the people.* As they were thus debtors to their country for that greatness which was founded solely on the public esteem, so virtue became necessary to support it; and it was therefore no wonder that Cosmo and Lorenzo

rendered themselves the admiration of Europe: far different indeed from those, who having acquired their greatness without their country, could only support it by the ruin of that country itself." (*a*)

XXXVIII.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 243. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 332.

"*The physician, Pier Leoni, whose prescriptions had failed of success, being apprized of the result, left Careggi in a state of distraction, and precipitated himself into a well in the suburbs of the city.*"

HAVING already stated at sufficient length, in a note on the above passage in the Life of Lorenzo, all the evidence that occurred to me on the subject, I shall not enter upon an examination of the numerous authorities adduced by Professor Pozzetti, to demonstrate that the odium of the death of Leoni rests on Piero de' Medici, the son of Lorenzo. (*b*) In account-

(*a*) *Galuzzi, Storia de' Gran Duchi, tom.* i. *Introd. p.* 46.

(*b*) *Pozzetti, Diss.* ii. *p.* 83. and *v. the Observations of Count Bossi, in the appendix to the present volume, No.* VI.

ing for this event, I have referred to what I thought the most probable cause, the distracted state of mind of the physician on finding that his efforts for his patient had been ineffectual, a supposition which does not, as Sannazar pretends, attach to his memory the infamy of suicide. That the filial affection of an ambitious youth like Piero, just arrived at manhood, would have been so violent as to have sought its revenge in the death of the physician, is by no means probable; and at all events no impartial and unsuspected evidence has ever been produced, that can justly charge him with the heinous crime of a cruel and unprovoked murder.

XXXIX.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 245. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 335.

"*Not a tomb nor an inscription marks the place that received his ashes.*"

"SCARCELY," says the eloquent Pignotti, "will posterity believe, that in the church of S. Lorenzo, amongst the sumptuous mausoleums erected to many individuals of the Medici fa-

mily, the tomb of Lorenzo is still wanting. The hand of Michelangiolo, which has so successfully laboured on those of his son and of his unworthy grandson, has forgotten its first benefactor." (*a*)

It is, however, observed in a note of the editor on the work of Pignotti, that the above expression is not to be taken strictly at the letter; for that the tomb of Lorenzo yet exists in the church of S. Lorenzo, although by no means worthy of his character, and without even an inscription to indicate his name. (*b*) That the place of his interment was known is evident, from the visit paid to it by Leo X., and related by Paris de Grassis, the Master of the Ceremonies, in his manuscript diary. (*c*)

(*a*) "Appena i forestieri lo crederanno: nel tempio di S. Lorenzo fra i mausolei fastosamente inalzati a molti personaggi della famiglia Medici, manca una tomba a Lorenzo. La mano di Michel Angiolo che ha maestrevolmente lavorato su quella di suo figlio, e dell' indigno nepote, ha obliato il suo primo benefattore."—*Pign. Storia della Toscana*, ix. 188.

(*b*) "L' expressione dell' autore non de' prendersi alla lettera; la tomba di Lorenzo il Magnifico esiste in S. Lorenzo, ma non in modo degno di si grand' uomo; mentre manca perfino un' iscrizione che l' additi."

(*c*) "Tunc papa ingressus est sacristiam, ubi visitavit sepulcrum patris sui, &c."—*v. Life of Leo* X.

To the researches of the learned and laborious Canonico Moreni we are indebted for some interesting particulars on this subject. In his description of the chapel erected by Michelagnolo in S. Lorenzo, for the family of the Medici, he has collected the most authentic notices respecting it. Amongst the documents consulted by him is an original MS. of Rondinelli, which formerly belonged to Manni, from which it appears, that on the third of June, 1559, the bodies of Lorenzo de' Medici and his brother Giuliano, which had remained many years in the ancient sacristy of S. Lorenzo, were removed and placed in a large sarcophagus of porphyry, which stands on the left hand on entering the sacristy. The body of Lorenzo was entire, and was covered with white drapery, with the berretino, or scarlet cap, on his head. He had then been buried sixty-seven years. The body of Giuliano was entirely decayed. The wound on his head, which he received in the conspiracy of the Pazzi, and which had penetrated the bone, was however still apparent; and that of Lorenzo in his throat was visible, although the mark was faint. This circumstance is also adverted to in another Florentine diary of Lapini, a chaplain of S. Maria del Fiore, formerly belonging to the Marchese Giuseppe Pucci, in which it is stated, that on the 3d June, 1559, on the sab-

bath, after evening service, the bodies of Lorenzo and Giuliano, both of the Medici family, which had been buried many years in the ancient sacristy of S. Lorenzo, were removed from that place and deposited in the Sacristia Nuova, &c. (*a*)

XL.

v. 4to. ed. vol. ii. p. 248. 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 338.

"*The common mediator of Italy being now no more, the same interested and unenlightened motives, which had so often rendered that country the seat of treachery and of bloodshed, again began to operate; and the ambitious views of the different sovereigns became the more dangerous as they were the more concealed.*"

M. DE SISMONDI has contended, that it did not depend on the genius of any individual, either to retard or to hasten the crisis in which Italy was placed at the close of the fifteenth century, and that the death of Lorenzo was a

(*a*) *v. Moreni, Descrittione Storico-Critica della Capella di principi, &c. ap. Pignotti, tom.* ix. 188, *note, p.* 207.

matter of indifference to the prosperity of that country. "The Italians," says he, "who saw this overthrow of their country immediately succeed to a period of tranquillity, of riches, and of literary acquirements, attributed the change, of which they perceived the effects, to the men whom they had known. They gave to Lorenzo de' Medici the honour of having preserved the peace of Italy, because the great invasion that overthrew it did not take place till two years after his death." (*a*) "But Lorenzo de' Medici had not prevented Louis XI. from dictating to the old King René his testament of the twenty-second of July, 1474, in favour of the Count of Maine; or the latter from making his testament of the tenth of December, 1481, in favour of the crown of France. All the pretensions of the French sovereigns to the kingdom of Naples had been prepared long before hand; twelve years before the death of Lorenzo. These pretensions could not occa-

(*a*) "Les Italiens, qui virent tout à coup succéder ce bouleversement de leur patrie à une période de calme, de richesses, et d'éclat dans les lettres, attribuèrent le changement dont ils ressentoient les effets, aux hommes qu'ils avoient connus. Ils firent honneur à Laurent de' Medici d'avoir maintenu en paix l'Italie, parce que la grande invasion qui la bouleversa, n'eut lieu que deux ans après sa mort."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 360.

sion a war, either whilst the throne of France was occupied by an aged, sick, timid, avaricious, and suspicious sovereign, or during the minority of his son. The moment, however, was so fully arrived when such an ambitious project had become natural to France, that three of her kings, different by their character, their talents, by the stock from which they sprung, Charles VIII., Louis XII., and Francis I., devoted themselves to it with equal ardour. Lorenzo de' Medici could not have arrested their progress, even if his life had been prolonged to the age which he might naturally have expected. He could neither prevent nor retard the reunion of all the crowns of Spain, in the persons of Ferdinand and Isabella, the reunion of the inheritances of Burgundy and Austria, in that of Maximilian. He had not excited against the former the war of Grenada; against the second the revolt of the Flemings; and he could not attribute to himself the merit either of their activity or their repose." (*b*)

(*a*) "Mais Laurent de' Medicis n'avoit point empêché Louis XI. de dicter au vieux roi René son testament du 22 Juillet, 1474, en faveur du Compte du Maine, ou de dicter à celui-ci son testament du 10 Decembre, 1481, en faveur de la couronne de France. Toutes les prétensions des rois François au royaume de Naples avoient donc été préparées de longue main, douze ans avant la mort de Laurent. Ces pré-

It is very true, as M. de Sismondi states, that Lorenzo de' Medici could not perhaps have prevented either the nominal disposal of the crown of Naples, or the important events that took place in other nations of Europe; but it by no means follows from this, that the life or death of Lorenzo were equally indifferent to the affairs of Italy; or that circumstances would have been the same in case he had lived, as in the event of his death. Neither the character of Charles VIII., nor the situation of the times, was such as to render it at all improbable, that by prudent measures and proper representations, the expedition of the

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tensions ne pouvoient amener de guerre, ni pendant qu'un roi vieux, malade, timide, avare, soupçonneux, occupoit le trône, ni pendant la minorité de son fils. Le moment etoit cependant si bien venu où une telle ambition deviendroit naturelle à la France, que trois de ses rois, différens par leur caractère, par leurs talens, par le sang même dont ils sortoient, Charles VIII., Louis XII., et Francois I., s'y livrerent avec une égale ardeur. Laurent de' Medicis n'auroit point pu les arrêter, si sa vie s'etoit prolongée jusqu'à l'âge qu'il pouvoit naturellement atteindre. Il ne pouvoit non plus ni prevenir ni parer la réunion de toutes les couronnes d'Espagne entre les mains de Ferdinand et d'Isabelle, la réunion des héritages de Bourgogne et d'Autriche dans celles de Maximilien. Il n'avoit point suscité aux premiers la guerre de Granade; au seconde la revolte des Flamands; et il ne pouvoit s'attribuer le mérite ni de leur activité ni de leur repos."—*Hist. des Rep. Ital. tom.* xi. *p.* 361.

French King, which he was frequently on the point of abandoning, might have been wholly prevented. At all events, it is impossible that the same consequences would have resulted from it as actually took place. If Lorenzo had not prevented the descent of Charles VIII. into Italy, he would not at least have taken the precipitate measures adopted by his son Piero, in surrendering the Florentine fortresses to the French arms. He would not therefore have been deprived of his authority in Florence; nor would his family have been expelled the city. The Florentine state would still have maintained its rank and importance; and a series of events intirely different from those which occurred, would, in all probability, have taken place. The expedition of Charles VIII. notwithstanding the favourable circumstances by which it was attended, can scarcely be considered as successful. The influence of any powerful mind, that could have reconciled the discordant politics of the Italian princes, and united them in the common defence, would have produced a very different result. Even a very slight additional opposition to the fugitive army of France at the pass of the Taro, might have given the French sovereigns a wholesome lesson, and prevented those bloody contests that were soon afterwards renewed in Italy. As a single remove at chess varies the whole game, so the

death of an individual of such importance in the affairs of Europe as Lorenzo de' Medici, could not fail of producing such a change in its political relations, as must have varied them in an incalculable degree. To suppose, with M. de Sismondi, that the events which took place in Italy in the sixteenth century were unalterably fixed by those of the fifteenth, whatever the character and conduct of the actors might be, is to suppose that mankind are mere automatons, and under any given circumstances would all act precisely alike. This, however, was not the opinion of the sagacious Ferdinand of Naples, who in the memorable expression which he made use of on the death of Lorenzo, certainly alluded to the rumours, which even then were abroad, of the intended descent of the French. "*Lorenzo,*" said he, "*has lived long enough for himself, but not for Italy. I wish no one may attempt, now he is gone, what they would never have dared to do had he been living.*"(*a*). To the opinions of Guicciardini and Macchiavelli, both of whom were personally and deeply engaged in the political events of the times, that of M. de Sismondi stands in direct contradiction. Nor is he less opposed by modern writers of the best information and

(*a*) *Valori, vita Laur. Med. p.* 67.

highest authority. "Subsequent events," says Pignotti, "demonstrated how immature was the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, and how much Italy suffered in consequence of it. Were we to suppose that he had lived to an age equal, or even approaching to that of his grandfather, not only would the attack of Charles VIII. on Italy have been prevented, but Lorenzo would have seen his son elevated to the dignity of the papacy, and regulating its government. What a happy æra for Italy and for Tuscany would then have occurred! On this head we can indeed only be allowed to conjecture; but the fancy, guided by reason, may expatiate at will in this imaginary state, and contemplate Italy, fortified against the attacks of strangers, reunited by a stronger bond, flourishing under its own institutions and arts, and delivered from all those lamented struggles which occurred within so short a period of time."(*a*)

(*a*) "Gli eventi posteriori mostrarono quanto fu immatura la morte di Lorenzo, e quanto ne soffrì tutta l' Italia. In verità, si supponga che egli fosse giunto, o si fosse almeno avvicinato all' età dell' avo. Non solo non avrebbe avuto luogo in Italia la venuta di Carlo VIII. ma Lorenzo si sarebbe veduto il figlio elevato alla dignità di Papa, e regolandone il governo; qual aurea età poteva nascere per l' Italia e per la Toscana? Non si può, per verità, che indovinare; ma la fantasia guidata dalla ragione può spaziare a suo senno in quella imaginaria

To the same effect as that of the last mentioned writer, is the opinion of the celebrated Müller, whom M. de Sismondi considers as the first historian of the present age, and who has not hesitated to represent the death of Lorenzo de' Medici as a great calamity to Italy. It is not therefore against the biographer of Lorenzo only, but against the whole band of historians, as well contemporary as recent, that M. de Sismondi has to support the opinion which he has on this occasion thought proper to advance.

I cannot conclude this defence of the character of Lorenzo de' Medici, and of the fidelity of his English biographer, with a more decisive testimony than that of a writer, whose name, like that of Junius, yet remains a matter of conjecture; but whose intimate acquaintance with Italian literature, as evinced in his works, renders the opinion which he has so poetically, and at the same time so emphatically expressed, of indispensable importance in a question which,

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età, e contemplar l' Italia fortificata contro gli attacchi de' forestieri, riunita con un vincolo più saldo, più florida per le leggi, e le arti, e scevra da tutte quelle luttuose vicende ch' ebbero loco in sì poco tempo."—*Pignotti, Storia della Toscana, tom.* vi. *p.* 265.

after all, must be determined by the evidence of those who are best qualified to judge on the subject.

Extract from THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE, *a Poem, Part III. fifth Edition, London,* 1798.

" But hark, what solemn sounds from Arno's vales,
Breathe raptures wafted on the Tuscan gales!
LORENZO rears again his awful head,
And feels his ancient glories round him spread.
The Muses, starting from their trance, revive,
And at their ROSCOE's bidding, wake and live.
The LATIAN GENIUS vindicates his state,
And proudly hails the great triumvirate :*
Lords of the lyre, and fathers of the song,
In fancy's order as they pass along,
There musing deep in philosophic groves,
His Tuscan Academe LORENZO roves;
While prophets of his great reviving name,
From isles of fragrance and Athenian fame,
Sages and bards in classic pomp appear;
BESSARION, and PHILELPHO's form severe:
MARSILIUS, rob'd in olive, Plato's priest;
JANUS, with treasures from the learned East;
And HE, who from Eleusis flaming bore,
The torch of science to his native shore,
Fam'd CHRYSOLORAS; and LANDINO bold,
In studious shades high converse form'd to hold.

* Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch.

POLITIAN, chief of all th' enlighten'd race,
In Lydian softness and Horatian grace;
And MICHAEL, whose bold hand the gods direct,
The sculptor, painter, poet, architect;
Michael, to Britain dear, so Genius spoke,
When his last praise from parting REYNOLDS broke;
And all whose brows, with ivy grac'd or bays,
Brighten'd their LEO's visionary days.
Names which I long have blest, nor blest in vain;
Oh! were I number'd in their sacred train,
To realms of purest light, where heroes dwell,
Her bolder notes the willing muse should swell,
In lyric intonation, grave and deep,
Nor dream with folly, nor with dulness sleep;
To COWPER, and to GIFFORD, leave the rod,
For songs celestial and the Delian God:
Then calmly to the secret mount retire,
Bid satire glance on folly, and expire."

APPENDIX

OF

JUSTIFICATORY AND EXPLANATORY

DOCUMENTS.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

DEDICATION

Prefixed to the German Translation of the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici.

TO MY MUCH-LOVED AND ONLY BROTHER, THE REV. VICTOR SPRENGEL, AT TILSIT, IN EAST PRUSSIA.

In dedicating this Translation to you, my dearest Brother, I found a sufficient motive in the task itself. It was with delight and enthusiasm I began and finished it; for the description of that intellectual morn, before which the night of barbarism vanished, and moreover the life of a man, the ornament of his age, and whom we may consider as the leading star, and herald of the dawn; and, in particular, the pleasing recollection of Greece and Grecian literature, which will naturally occur to every well informed reader of this work; all combined to attract and captivate the mind.

These circumstances will interest us still more, when we reflect on the education we received from our worthy Father; when, through the study of the ancients, he endeavoured to cultivate in our minds a taste for truth and beauty in all their forms. How delightful to us is the remembrance of that golden dream of our youth, when the mighty forms of the ancient world hovered over

us; when our feelings enlivened and ennobled all objects, and we sought and revered only what is divine in man. Thrice happy years, which we spent together on the peaceful shores of the Baltic, content and blessed in each other's society, while our minds reposed in contemplation on the charms of nature, or turned in religious ardour to the Author of all good. Then you repaired to your Plutarch, and I to my Herodotus, and though widely differing in our pursuits, still clinging to each other with an affection that seemed fully to illustrate the definition of friendship by an ancient Greek: "that it consisted of a harmony of sentiment, combined with good will and esteem, not to be excelled in nature."

How pleasing, too, the recollection of the time which we spent in the kingdom of the northern Gustavus, in preparing ourselves for public life! There, surrounded by airy spirits, and wrapt in contemplation, the revered shadows of the ancient world seemed to invite us to follow them; and there we renewed a friendship not unworthy of the times of ancient Greece.

But I have no need to call to your remembrance all the happy hours devoted to our common pursuits. Many parts of this work, and in particular the names of Politian, George of Trebezond, Theodore Gaza, and Bessarion, will bring to your mind our study of the History of the Restoration of the Arts and Sciences, in which, seventeen years ago, our time was so agreeably occupied.

In perusing this work, frequent parallels will probably suggest themselves to you of Athens and Florence; as both these republics exhibited at one period, an assemblage of the most celebrated men, scholars, and artists;

were the fosterers of the noblest patriotism, protectors of all the Sciences and Polite Arts, and the central points from whence sprung the enlightening of their own, and the cultivation of succeeding ages.

As in the time of Lorenzo, the Florentine State was not only the most flourishing, and the happiest in Italy, but had also the most marked and beneficial influence on the civilized world; so, in the time of Pericles, a happy combination of circumstances formed the Athenians into the most refined and powerful people of the earth. And, as in the days of Lorenzo, Florence, through the wisdom of her chief, and the almost inexhaustible resources of her extensive commerce, obtained a decided superiority over Venice, her competitor in trade, the Pope, and the King of Naples, and princes in league with him: so Athens, under Pericles, not only triumphed over her foreign enemies, but gained a signal preponderance over her great rival Sparta; and succeeded, to such a degree, in gaining the respect of the combined States, that the common treasure of Greece was removed to Athens from Delos, and Pericles thereby placed in a situation to support the extraordinary expenditure attending those astonishing works of art, which, whilst they established the fame of Athens, became immortal monuments of human genius.

You will remark, too, a singular resemblance between the forms of government in both States, such as they were found by Lorenzo and Pericles. In Florence, the Guelfs and Ghibelines, who were spread over all Italy, had, for centuries past, been the cause of the most fatal disputes; and the contending parties of the aristocracy and the democracy had, with varied success,

prolonged these most destructive feuds. During the time of John de' Medici, the aristocracy was headed by the Uzzani and Albizzi; the democracy by the Ricci, Pucci, and Medici. The aristocracy, whose arbitrary and interested views were undeniable, were so far crushed during the war with Lucca and other neighbouring States, in which the people took a more active part than the nobles, that the democratic party obtained an equalization of the taxes, which, till that time, had been levied in an arbitrary manner at the will of the nobles, and to the oppression of the lower classes. This measure was intended as a recompense to the people for their exertions during the war, and the rich and powerful, on whom a great part of the common burthen now fell, found themselves more oppressed by it than they could have imagined; and hence John de' Medici gained the favour of the people, to so extraordinary a degree, that he was thereby enabled to lay a foundation for the future aggrandizement of his House. From that period the noble families of Florence could never obtain a permanent superiority over the people, and their attempt in the time of Cosmo to banish the democratic Medici succeeded so ill, that they were immediately compelled to recal them.

So, after the days of Solon and Pisistratus, the oligarchy of Athens had, by degrees, been changed into a democracy. Consistently with the laws of Solon, none but the rich, or the first of the four classes, could lay claim to the great public offices. The other classes were permitted to vote at elections, and take a share in the legislature. The Areopagus was the highest court of judicature, which was filled only by men of experience, and who had served the office of Archon. These

laws of Solon were stedfastly maintained by Pisistratus, and his son Hipparchus; and the Athenians were a happy people during this monarchy, if we may believe Plato, who tells us, that the golden age of Saturn was again restored in the days of Hipparchus. But after the Pisistratidæ had been compelled to yield to the democratic party of the Alcmanidæ under Clisthenes, the latter gained the superiority at Athens, as the people did in Florence; and both chiefly during foreign wars. Clisthenes had already introduced the destructive ostracism in favor of the people, and even the just Aristides shook the leading principle of the laws of Solon by the Psephisma, by which all ranks, the poor as well as the rich, were made eligible to the offices of state. Thus, a foundation for democracy was already laid, when Pericles commenced his career of public life.

The difference in this parallel between Lorenzo and Pericles, which first strikes us, is in the manner in which each obtained the favour of the people, and raised himself above them, and how difficult it was to the one, and how easy to the other, to retain his acquired power. To the Florentine it was so much the more easy to administer a wise and happy government under a democratic form, as his ancestors had fully secured the goodwill and affection of the people, which now seemed the natural inheritance of his family. Nor was there occasion for Lorenzo to justify, by any great acts of heroism, his pretensions to the first rank in the state; since Florence, though engaged in numerous feuds with her neighbours, might be regarded rather as a commercial than a warlike state. Lorenzo, too, from his earliest youth, had been made sensible of his high destiny, and had received from his grandfather Cosmo, the

wisest instructions for maintaining himself as head of the Florentine government. Much greater were the difficulties which Pericles, the son of Xantippus, had to surmount, without taking into account his personal resemblance to the tyrant Pisistratus, which was not likely to prepossess the people in his favour. On the maternal side he was descended from Clisthenes, and thence, undoubtedly, originated his early enmity against the Βιλτίστους, as they are called by Xenophon, and, in particular, against the Areopagus, the only remnant of a form of government, organized by Solon, and maintained by Pisistratus and his adherents. But what men, what heroes, were his competitors! Miltiades, Themistocles, Pausanias, Aristides, Cimon! To realize his ambition, it was necessary not only to rival these men in military talents, but to destroy their popularity. This was the more difficult, as the heroic fame of the two first was unattainable, and the civic virtue of the two last, incorruptible; and the justice and integrity of Aristides was so well known to the whole of the people, that when an actor on the stage, in speaking of Amphiaraus, pronounced the sentence—"He will not only appear just, but be so;" all the assembly instantly turned to Aristides. And how must Cimon have confirmed himself in the love of the people, when he clothed the naked, fed the hungry, and administered relief to the indigent! Such men, the conquerors at Marathon, Salamis, Platæa, and on the Eurymedon, were the rivals of Pericles, and these he must surpass in their actions, or, by other means, establish himself in the favour of the people. And how formidable an enterprize was it, to weaken the authority, and totally subvert the power of the Areopagus, that venerable court of justice, which had ever won the admiration of the best and wisest men. Yet

did Pericles accomplish this hazardous undertaking, by inciting the people, by means of the Ephialtes, against the aristocratic party, by numerous feasts, amusements, and theatrical exhibitions, and overpowering all minds by his supreme eloquence. Still he could not have succeeded, had not Cimon fallen under the suspicion of having favoured the Spartans, a suspicion to which Pericles contrived to give so great an appearance of probability, that he thereby procured his banishment. Yet his success here was not complete, for the people returned once more to their favourite Cimon, and Pericles was obliged to sign the Psephisma for his recal. Moreover Thucydides, the relative of Cimon, was his most zealous opponent, though he inherited Cimon's sense of justice to that degree, that he was one of the first in extolling the merits of Pericles.

Both Lorenzo and Pericles governed not as despots, but as wise guardians, or first servants of the state. They might both be considered independent rulers, though, perhaps, unknown to the people. Pericles, in particular, after his subjection of the party of Thucydides, possessed unlimited influence at Athens, and indeed over all Greece; and Thucydides assures us, that the form of the government at Athens was in fact monarchical, and only nominally democratic. The honourable testimony borne by Thucydides to Pericles, furnishes us with a beautiful parallel between him and Lorenzo; that he had ruled in time of peace, and more particularly in time of war, with the greatest moderation and prudence, and that he was the most upright and incorruptible of his fellow citizens; that having obtained the government, or rather the first office in the state, through honourable means, he had always availed himself of that power to

the benefit of the state; and that it was not till after his death, that his salutary plans for warlike operations were properly appreciated. What can speak more highly in favour of Pericles, than this acknowledgment from so illustrious an opponent; and how great the statesman and historian appears to us, in this impartial commendation of his rival! Where, but in ancient Greece, can we look for this candour, this high and noble minded manner of thinking? . . . No! believe me, Brother, we did not deceive ourselves, when, in our youthful dreams, we found in Greece all that is beautiful and excelling in human nature! . . .

As Lorenzo's irresistible elequence rendered him the most salutary services in the most trying situations, and as he applied this constantly, with a prudent choice of the fittest period for the benefit of the state, so was Pericles, agreeably to the testimony of Plato and Cicero, the first orator of his age. As Macchiavel has handed down to us one of Lorenzo's finest orations, which I have in this Translation called, 'The Triumph of Italian Eloquence:' so Thucydides has furnished us with a beautiful speech of Pericles, calculated to exalt the rising statesman to the highest pitch of favour with the Athenian people. Lorenzo and Pericles were once similarly situated. Lorenzo when, during the war with the Pope and King of Naples, the discontent of the people had risen to a high degree; Pericles when the Athenians, and not without cause, had accused him of being the author of the Peloponnesian war. Lorenzo adopted a measure to appease the people, dictated by the most heroic patriotism—he delivered himself up to his enemies. Pericles made his defence in an eloquent speech, which pacified the people, but could not obliterate all

signs of dissatisfaction, as the Athenians imposed on him a pecuniary fine; though, as Thucydides adds, agreeably to the caprice of the vulgar, they soon afterwards gave him the command of the army.

As Lorenzo, during the time he held the government, moderated the sallies of popular fury, and the spirit of dominion in the Florentines, and taught the people that it was better to sacrifice all schemes of extension of territory, than to expose the state to the danger of domestic distractions; so Pericles endeavoured, by his public harangues, frequently to recal the people from their dangerous errors, into the path of wise and moderate conduct. Often did he oppose himself to the torrent of public opinion, and always by his all-conquering eloquence, brought over the people to his own views. The Athenians formed a glorious example for their imitation in his disinterestedness, which he carried to that extent, that he left behind him a smaller estate than he had inherited from his father. When after the successful campaigns in Pontus, Chersonesus, and Thrace, the Athenians wished to reconquer the coast of Egypt, Pericles restrained them from the enterprize by representing to them, that the maintenance and the security of the state was their first and greatest duty.

Lorenzo availed himself on one occasion of an expedient which has often proved of more advantage than the most complete victory—bribery; by which means he quelled the disturbance caused by Buccolino Guzzoni at Osimo. In a similar manner, and with like success, Pericles acted, when Plistonax had led a Spartan force into the Athenian territory, to assist the Megareans, who had revolted against Athens. Pericles, who at that

time was stationed at Eubœa with an army, which he could not draw from thence; profited by the avarice of Cleandrides, on whose co-operation young Plistonax relied. Ten talents of gold sent to Cleandrides had more effect than the most brilliant victory—the immediate retreat of the Spartan army.

As Lorenzo forgave injuries to himself with the most commendable self-denial, and bestowed kindnesses even on his enemies with undissembled magnanimity, so Pericles overlooked and forgot all malevolent insinuations and all vexations, even to public derision from his adversaries. Plutarch, in his Life of Pericles, relates further examples of his greatness of mind; and when his former tutor, and afterwards his philosophical friend, Zeno of Elea, was by some person upbraidingly told, that this magnanimity and moderation of Pericles was only affectation; he replied, "In that, then, I would advise you to imitate him; for, by affecting a love of virtue, you may yourself become enamoured of her, and by habit become sincere in the practice of her precepts."

In one point, where the characters of these two men differ, I find the advantage on the side of the Florentine. Pericles appeared seldom in public, and always with a certain commanding gravity; his eloquence, too, was reserved for important occasions. Whereas Lorenzo was found daily amongst the people, mixed in all their sports, shared all their pleasures, and was familiar with all ranks. How much indeed does the loquacious, the witty, the affable Lorenzo differ from the silent and reserved Pericles, of whom it is related that he but once appeared at a feast, and was only once known to shed tears—on the death of his son Paralus; and for which

reserve, and the thunder of his eloquence, he received the name of Olympian. I pass by in silence his other public actions, which incurred the censure of Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, and Plutarch; in particular the salaries introduced by him for the judges and advocates, his connection with Aspasia, and the corruption of morals which are chiefly laid to his charge; since it is an easy matter to find argument for his justification.

The most striking similitude between Lorenzo and Pericles, appears in the astonishing progress made in both their times, in the extension of science, and refinement of the polite arts. They both received their education from philosophers, who might be called the ornaments of their country. Marsilius Ficinus, Landinus, Argyropylus, Gentilis d'Urbino, and Leo. Bapt. Alberti, were the teachers of Lorenzo. Pericles enjoyed the instruction and friendship of Anaxagoras, and Zeno of Elea. To the first of these, Pericles was indebted for his lofty ideas, for his noble manner of expressing himself, purified from all mixture of vulgar phrases, and, for what was of still higher value, a mind freed from all vulgar prejudices and superstition, his well founded knowledge of nature, and his unshaken piety, grounded on the hope of a happy future state. How little indeed Pericles was prone to superstition, the following anecdote told by Plutarch may testify. An Athenian army being once on the point of embarking under his command, there occurred an eclipse of the sun, which spread such consternation among the troops that none could be prevailed on to venture on an expedition, against which the displeasure of the God of the Sun was but too plainly manifested. Pericles alone remained firm, and in order to shew the folly of his fears to the master of

the vessel, he threw his cloak over him, asking him if he then imagined the darkness of his eyes to forebode a misfortune. The only difference, added the enlightened commander, between the eclipse of the Sun, and this darkness of your eyes, is, that the former is produced by a larger body. When Pericles lay on his death-bed, some officious women had hung amulets about him, which he shewed to one of his friends to make him sensible how dangerous his situation was, when he allowed his attendant to use such superstitious practices. Yet Pericles dared not make too public an avowal of these enlightened sentiments, since Anaxagoras had already been thrown into prison by the people as a Free-thinker or Meteorologist; and Pericles himself had also been accused by Diopeithes of contempt for the established religion. Lorenzo was less exempt from the prejudices of his age, if we may judge from his connexion with the monks, and many traits of him handed down to us by Politian. But Ficinus was no Anaxagoras.

A great difference is observable between Lorenzo and Pericles in respect to their influence on literature. As the learned contemporaries of Lorenzo were far inferior to the philosophers of the age of Pericles, not only in greatness and originality of mind, but in their influence on the culture of succeeding ages, so was Pericles far inferior to Lorenzo as a promoter of real learning. Pericles cannot be said to have really created any man of genius by his individual influence. All his contemporaries, Anaxagoras, Zeno, but, in particular, Thucydides, Hippocrates, Leucippus, Sophocles, Euripides, Gorgias, Herodicus, and last of all Socrates, were in no wise indebted to him for their celebrity. It was rather to be ascribed to a combination of fortunate circumstances,

than to the influence of Pericles, that the Athenians alone of all the Greeks, could boast of having found in the practice of the Socratic philosophy the true path to happiness and wisdom. If, on the other hand, we regard Lorenzo's exertions in favour of the sciences, his merits will appear to us in a much stronger light. Without him no Greek academy would have been formed at Florence, nor would Ficinus, Argyropylus, Gaza, Politian, Scala, and other celebrated men, have obtained the rank they possess in the annals of literature.

Yet we must look on Pericles as more fortunate than Lorenzo, when we compare the success of their endeavours for the promotion of art. Lorenzo accomplished all that could be done in his time to restore a true taste. He founded that celebrated school for young artists in the study of the antique, which formed them into worthy imitators of the ancients, and without him Michael Angelo would not have shone forth the first genius of his age. Still, under his patronage, the arts did not make those incalculable strides to perfection which they had done in the time of Pericles. But, before his era, the Greeks had gained their brilliant victories over the Persians, and freedom, the parent of all perfection and of all great actions, had already awaked the spirit of the nation. The rich booty of the East had introduced luxury and opulence into Athens, and artists, during the public games in Olympia, on the Isthmus of Corinth, at Nemea and Delphos, had submitted their works to the admiration of united Greece. Before this time too the Greeks, and in particular the Athenians, had manifested their refined taste for art, and their esteem for celebrated artists was shewn by dedicating statues to them, and the first men of the age deemed themselves honoured

by their society. Pericles however was enabled to procure for artists of every class the best opportunities for the application and cultivation of their talents, by the frequent entertainments he gave to the people, the many public edifices he erected, the great victories he achieved, the immense sums of money he levied as subsidies from the allies of the state, and, lastly, by the removal of the common treasure of Greece from Delos to Athens. He had it thus in his power to reward the artists more lavishly than Lorenzo, whose means arose solely out of his private purse. Whilst Polygnotus the "soul painter" (ἠθικος), painted at his own charge the Poikile at Athens, and Mnesicles erected the Propylæa of the Acropolis; whilst Euphranor in his Paris first produced the exact proportion of form, and Parrhasius combined in his works, a softness and roundness of outline with the most finished grace; Apollodorus, by his judicious distribution of light and shadow, Zeuxis and Polycletus, in the visible representation of ideal beauty, and Phidias, in the structure of the most astonishing temples, academies, theatres, galleries, the Odeon, the Pantheon, the Prytaneum, the Pnyx, and similar public edifices, achieved the perfection of art. The works of these men of immortal genius, are the noblest monuments to the glory of that man who thus conceived and matured the full idea of art.

I conclude this parallel between Lorenzo and Pericles with an observation which I trust, my dear Brother, you will not condemn. It appears to me, that however they may manifest their desire, it is seldom that princes have it in their power to be the real promoters of the arts and sciences. They often obtain the title of Patrons of Learning, by merely tolerating the learned, and perhaps

it would be better if they went no farther, for if they are induced to take learned men under their protection, or invite them to their courts; they frequently debase them into flatterers, and yield to them, as a mark of their bounty, what the country ought to bestow on those who contribute to the dissemination of useful knowledge, and the cultivation of art; and it may be questioned whether such patrons do not rather injure than benefit the cause they espouse. This is the reason, that, immediately after Alexander, the Ptolemies, and Louis XII., the arts and sciences so rapidly declined. Widely different is the case in states like Athens and Florence, where freedom calls the slumbering powers of the mind into full and unrestrained activity; where men of letters and artists need not flatter princes in order to gain a livelihood; where the muses are not degraded, but meet with universal regard and esteem. It is only where some rich individual like Lorenzo and Pericles recompense the exertions of literary men, and the labours of artists, that they become the real promoters of science and art. Both Lorenzo and Pericles lived on a footing of equality with the learned men and artists of their time, and contributed the requisite support, and the reward for their labours, not in the manner of a favour, but as an offering, due of right, to the muses.

I must here pause, in order to say a few words on the subject of my own labours. I received the original of this work from my friend Forster in July last, to whom it was sent from England as a very interesting work. Not only my predilection for Italian literature, the study of which as you know has been the most agreeable em-

ployment of my leisure hours, but still more my profession, which embraces the sciences connected with physiology, prompted me to peruse this work with the greatest attention. As the author frequently refers to Fabroni, I endeavoured to procure that work likewise, and obtained the loan of it from a friend abroad. At first I was, like Roscoe, inclined to translate Fabroni, and to take the additions from Roscoe; the more so, as the frequent digressions of the latter appeared to me to be detrimental to the unity of the work. But I soon found that the Italian was hesitating and partial in his judgment, and that he wanted, above all, the spirit of free discussion, and extensive knowledge of the Englishman. I found, too, that the principal advantage of Fabroni's work, as a careful supplier of original documents, the most important whereof Roscoe had already inserted in his work, must be dispensed with in a German publication; and, finally, that the want of unity, and of a fixed plan, which appeared to me on first opening Roscoe's work, was only imaginary, and vanished upon a mature and impartial investigation; I found, lastly, so many charms in the composition of the Englishman, that I readily preferred translating his work, to rendering Fabroni into German, and endeavoured to supply out of Fabroni such references only as I found wanting in Roscoe.

In regard to the Translation itself, I have always, in translating, followed the practice of Politian, of which he gives us an account in the preface to his Translation of Herodian: "Tentavimus, uti omnia ex fide responderent; ne inepta peregrinitas, ne Græculæ usquam figuræ, nisi si quæ jam pro acceptis haberentur, Latinam quasi polluerent castitatem; ut eadem propemodum esset linguæ utriusque perspicuitas, eædem munditiæ, idem utro-

bique sensus atque indoles; nulla vocum morositas, nulla anxietas." . . . The bare literal meaning can never be the object of a good translation, which is to arrive at the sense, and express it in the best possible manner. In order that the ear might form a judgment of the correctness of the expression, the purity of diction, and harmony of the periods, I dictated the translation to two of my auditors. It is possible that the orthography may have, in some degree, suffered thereby; but the most material part has been revised.

I could not add to this Translation all the documents, contained in the appendix of the original, drawn partly from Fabroni; partly from the Archives of Florence, as it would have enhanced the price too far. I have however inserted by way of notes, where I thought it necessary, the most important extracts from the appendix.

It was impossible, however, for me to debar the lovers of Italian literature, of those beautiful poems of Lorenzo, which Roscoe has, for the first time, printed. I have watched with great care over the correctness of the press, and occasionally corrected some small errors, which might have originated from the copier or the printer.

Accept now, my dear Brother, this work of mine, with favour and affection, and be assured that I often look forward with delight to that period, when we, whose minds nature formed for an indissoluble friendship, but whom fate has so widely separated, shall be for ever united.

SPRENGEL.

Halle, April, 1797.

No. II.

LETTRE

DU TRADUCTEUR AU CITOYEN JEAN-BARTHELEMI LECOUTEULX.

CITOYEN,

En m'invitant à faire connoître à mes compatriotes l'ouvrage dont je donne aujourd'hui la traduction, vous avez pensé, avec raison, que, réunissant au double mérite d'instruire et d'intéresser, celui d'être, à certains égards, approprié à la nature des circonstances où nous nous trouvons, cet ouvrage pourroit être très-utile sous plusieurs rapports essentiels. En effet, il n'est pas simplement, et comme son titre semble l'annoncer, le récit de la vie et des actions d'un seul individu distingué par ses talens comme écrivain et comme chef d'une république alors florissante; il présente en même temps le tableau d'une des époques les plus remarquables et les plus intéressantes de l'histoire moderne. Laurent de Médicis fut le témoin, et en partie l'un des coopérateurs de cette grande et heureuse révolution qui, après plus de dix siècles d'ignorance, de barbarie et de misère, fit renaître en Europe les sciences et les arts. Il contribua plus qu'aucun de ses ancêtres à la grandeur et à l'élévation de sa famille; mais malheureusement cette famille ne tarda pas à anéantir la liberté de sa patrie, et, par les alliances qu'elle contracta avec divers souverains, à remplir l'Europe de

crimes et de malheurs. Quel spectacle donc plus utile à présenter à des républicains, que la suite des évènemens qui accoutumèrent insensiblement au joug un peuple idolâtre de son indépendance! Quelle plus grande et plus importante leçon peut-on leur offrir? J'avoue que c'est sous ce point de vue sur-tout que j'ai envisagé le travail que j'avois entrepris; j'avoue que l'espoir d'être utile en ce sens m'a soutenu dans une tâche souvent pénible et qui offre peu d'attrait à l'imagination.

On a dit que l'histoire étoit l'*école des rois*, et c'étoit probablement alors ce qu'on pouvoit dire de plus beau en faveur de l'histoire: mais elle est mieux que cela sans doute; elle est l'école des peuples; elle offre à tous les hommes capables de réfléchir, un cours complet, si je puis m'exprimer ainsi, de la science expérimentale du cœur humain. Elle présente aux véritables amis de la liberté les motifs les plus puissans de chérir cette noble et généreuse indépendance, sans laquelle ils ne sauroient plus exister, et pour le maintien de laquelle les sacrifices les plus héroïques ne leur coûteront rien. Cicéron, qui apparemment s'étoit peu occupé de savoir ce qu'il convient aux rois d'apprendre, a dit de l'histoire qu'elle est la lumière de la vérité, la maîtresse de la vie (*magistra vitæ*). En effet, quoique les monumens historiques auxquels on peut reconnoître quelque authenticité ne remontent pas très-haut, l'histoire des sociétés politiques semble déja presenter des résultats dont il est possible de tirer des conséquences infiniment utiles au bonheur et au perfectionnement de l'espèce humaine. Et pour en donner un exemple sensible, je rappellerai cette vérité générale et très-importante, qui résulte de l'observation de tous les phénomènes historiques, et qui est relative aux révolutions qu'ont éprouvées les sociétés. Ou ces

révolutions sont le passage d'un état d'esclavage et d'asservissement à un état d'affranchissement et de liberté, ou elles sont, au contraire, le passage de l'état de liberté au despotisme. Dans le premier cas, elles sont le produit des lumières et de l'énergie croissante de la société qui les opère; dans le second, elles sont le résultat de la détérioration, de l'ignorance et de l'avilissement de la société qui les subit: en sorte que, partout et dans tous les temps, l'histoire nous présente cet enchaînement infaillible et nécessaire de causes et d'effets: 1°. perfectionnement, lumières, force, liberté, et bonheur plus ou moins grand, suivant le degré d'énergie des causes qui le produisent et que je viens d'indiquer; 2°. détérioration, ignorance, barbarie, esclavage, et misère aussi plus ou moins grande suivant le degré d'intensité des causes qui la produisent.* Mais je reviens à la *vie de Laurent de Médicis.*

* Si cette vérité pouvoit être contestée, je crois que ce ne seroit que faute de s'entendre sur la valeur des mots, comme il arrive si souvent. Ainsi, par exemple, il peut y avoir des hommes très-distingués par leur génie et par leurs lumières dans une nation ignorante et barbare; ainsi il ne faut pas confondre les sciences et les connoissances directement utiles à la société, avec les beaux-arts, et les connoissances, qui sont, pour ainsi dire, purement de luxe, etc., etc. Peut-être néanmoins me fera-t-on une objection à laquelle il est, je crois, utile de répondre d'avance. Les Anglais, me dira-t-on, ne sont pas un peuple libre, et pourtant la nation anglaise est, à tout prendre, aussi éclairée que le peuple français. Je ne conteste assurément pas qu'il n'y ait en Angleterre beaucoup d'hommes très-éclairés sur les matières de gouvernement; aussi suis-je très-convaincu que, si la paix se rétablissoit en Europe, il ne se passeroit pas beaucoup d'années sans que l'Angleterre éprouvât une révolution politique; et le soin que le gouvernement anglais prend depuis quelques années d'éterniser la guerre présente, l'opposition constante qu'il a manifestée pour la paix, me portent à croire qu'il a un secret pressentiment de la destinée qui l'attend, s'il laisse la nation respirer un moment, et s'il cesse de l'agiter par des craintes qui lui ôtent le sentiment de sa force, et qui l'aveuglent sur la véritable cause des maux qu'elle éprouve.

J'ai trouvé comme vous, citoyen, le livre de M. Roscoe, extrêmement recommandable par les idées libérales qui y sont répandues, par les connoissances étendues et les recherches profondes qu'il renferme sur l'histoire et sur la littérature de la république de Florence, et même du reste de l'Italie. D'ailleurs, le ton de candeur qui y règne par-tout, la manière noble et décente avec laquelle l'auteur discute ou critique les opinions des écrivains qui l'ont précédé dans la même carrière, inspirent une estime réelle pour son caractère personnel, en même temps que son style harmonieux et élégant, son goût pur et éclairé, donnent de ses talens l'idée la plus avantageuse. Mais il me sera permis, je crois, de m'expliquer avec la même franchise sur les défauts que j'ai cru remarquer dans cet intéressant ouvrage. Il me semble que M. Roscoe n'a pas employé une méthode assez rigoureuse, et que le défaut d'ordre dans les diverses parties de sa narration empêche que l'on ne saisisse l'ensemble des faits et leurs résultats avec clarté et facilité. Le parti qu'il a pris de consacrer alternativement un chapitre à l'histoire politique, et un chapitre à l'histoire des arts et de la littérature, n'offre qu'un ordre apparent, et ne remédie pas à l'inconvénient de voir les mêmes hommes et presque les mêmes faits se représenter plusieurs fois dans la suite de l'ouvrage. Enfin, l'auteur paroîtra peut-être, sur-tout aux yeux des lectures français, avoir trop craint de sacrifier quelques parties peu importantes de ses travaux et de ses recherches, et l'on trouvera probablement que les longues notes bibliographiques et autres, qu'il a fort multipliées, interrompent trop souvent le cours de la narration. Au reste, les gens de lettres pardonneront volontiers à M. Roscoe ce luxe d'érudition, qu'un goût plus sévère peut-être lui eût fait supprimer, en faveur

des connoissances utile ou agréables qu'ils trouveront dans son ouvrage.

Mais un reproche plus grave dont il seroit difficile de défendre notre auteur, c'est l'espèce de partialité, quelquefois trop évidente, qu'il montre en faveur de son héros. Il lui arrive, en plusieurs circonstances, d'excuser ou d'atténuer des actions et des démarches qu'aucun principe ne pouvoit justifier. On ne sauroit nier que Laurent de Médicis n'eût des grands talens, des qualités brillantes, et même quelques-unes des vertus nécessaires à ceux qui gouvernent les hommes. Mais il étoit dévoré d'une ambition démesurée, qui le fit manquer plus d'une fois à ce qu'il devoit à sa patrie, et qui lui fit violer ouvertement les préceptes de cette religion même à laquelle il affectoit néanmoins de se montrer si soumis et si dévoué. M. Roscoe, en traçant avec sagacité les progrès insensibles du despotisme, et en peignant avec une généreuse chaleur les maux qui en furent la suite, n'assigne pas à ces maux leur véritable cause. Il semble les attribuer au caractère remuant et séditieux des Florentins; mais ce caractère, chez un peuple libre, est souvent l'instinct de la liberté, et cet instinct-là ne trompe guères. Notre auteur n'a pas vu, ou a craint de dire, que la constitution de ce peuple étoit entachée d'un vice radical, qui a causé la ruine des républiques de la Grèce et de celle de Rome, je veux dire *l'hérédité*. Par-tout où ce monstrueux système sera établi, il est impossible qu'il existe de véritables droits politiques. Si le gouvernement est républicain, cette malheureuse distinction, dont on sent à chaque instant l'odieux et le ridicule, y fomentera des querelles sans cesse renaissantes; s'il est despotique ou monarchique, elle servira à maintenir le peuple dans l'abrutis-

sement et dans l'esclavage, jusqu'à ce qu'il survienne entre le despote et le corps des privilégiés quelques dissentions qui fournissent à ce peuple trop long-temps opprimé l'occasion et les moyens de les écraser tous deux, et de recouvrer ses droits.

L'espèce d'affectation avec laquelle M. Roscoe s'attache à justifier Laurent de Médicis d'avoir forgé, en quelque sorte, la chaîne où ses successeurs mirent la malheureuse république de Florence, détourne, pour ainsi dire, l'attention des lecteurs d'un autre fait non moins important à observer; c'est la facilité avec laquelle certaines familles obtiennent, dans les petits états, une influence et un crédit qui bientôt les met à même d'aspirer à l'autorité suprême. L'histoire de la Grèce en offre de nombreux exemples, et celle de la république romaine le confirme d'une manière encore plus frappante. En effet, quoique la domination des Romains s'étendît sur presque toutes les parties du monde connu, au moment où leur liberté fut anéantie, il n'en est pas moins vrai que la république n'existoit que dans l'enceinte même de Rome: d'où il faut conclure qu'au lieu de dire, comme on l'a fait, que cet état étoit dès-lors trop étendu pour comporter un gouvernement républicain, il auroit fallu dire, au contraire, que, d'un côté, la vaste étendue de la domination romaine offroit à l'ambition un appât trop séduisant pour qu'elle ne fût pas tentée d'envahir tant de puissance et de richesses; et que, de l'autre, la république romaine étoit resserrée dans des bornes trop étroites pour qu'un ambitieux ne conçût pas l'espoir de parvenir, par son crédit ou par celui de sa famille et de ses amis, à ce pouvoir suprême où tendoient tous ses vœux. Mais il est bien évident que, dans un grand état, cet inconvénient, qui a causé la ruine des républiques anciennes,

devient presque nul; car alors la sphère d'activité, pour ainsi dire, d'un individu ou d'une famille est toujours infiniment bornée, par rapport à la vaste étendue du pays sur lequel ils entreprendroinent de dominer.

Je suis loin néanmoins, dans tout ceci, de vouloir faire le procès à M. Roscoe: il est très-possible qu'étant sujet d'un gouvernement monarchique, et dans lequel le système de l'hérédité est admis, il ait cru ne pas devoir s'expliquer ouvertement sur ces objets. On sait d'ailleurs que les Anglais, en particulier, portent jusqu'à la superstition le respect qu'ils ont pour leurs lois et pour leur constitution. J'observerai seulement, à ce sujet, que le respect des lois et des institutions n'est pas et ne peut pas être de même nature dans les états libres et dans ceux qui ne le sont pas. Comme l'égalité, par exemple, est la base nécessaire de tout état républicain, le premier devoir d'un pareil gouvernement, s'il veut subsister, c'est d'établir et de maintenir cette égalité par tous les moyens qui sont en son pouvoir. Or le moyen le plus sûr et le plus efficace pour parvenir à ce but, c'est de propager les lumières et la vérité sur tous les objets. Voilà pourquoi tout, dans une république, même les lois, même la constitution, doit être l'objet d'un examen continuel. Les lois, tant qu'elles ont la sanction des pouvoirs qui les ont établies, et qui sont chargés de les conserver, doivent enchaîner les actions du citoyen; mais sa soumission ne sauroit s'étendre plus loin sans devenir absurde ou funeste; les lois ne peuvent enchaîner ni sa raison, ni ses lumières: autrement, il n'y auroit plus d'amélioration possible; et la plus noble faculté de l'homme, sa perfectibilité indéfinie, se trouveroit, sinon anéantie, du moins prodigieusement entravée. Cette vérité est sensible, et doit être admise sans difficulté par la masse du

peuple, dans un état libre, parce que l'intérêt de tous est que les lois soient égales, et les meilleures possibles, pour tous. Mais il ne sauroit en être de même dans les états où le système absurde de l'hérédité est admis; car il est évident que là, les lois, les institutions étant établies pour et par un petit nombre de familles et d'individus au préjudice du reste de la nation, ceux-ci ont le plus grand intérêt à faire du respect pour les lois une espèce de culte dont ils sont les ministres, et qui ne souffre de modifications que par les empiétemens continuels, mais presqu'insensibles du pouvoir despotique sur le peu qui reste de droits et de libertés à la nation. En un mot, chez les peuples libres, le respect pour les lois est un calcul de l'intérêt général et individuel bien entendu. Chez les peuples esclaves, c'est une religion qui, comme toutes les autres, ne souffre point d'examen, parce qu'elle ne sauroit le supporter.

Ces réflexions peuvent servir à nous faire comprendre pourquoi les modernes, qui, depuis la renaissance des lettres, ont égalé et souvent même surpassé les anciens dans certaines parties des sciences et de la littérature, n'ont point encore eu d'historiens que l'on puisse comparer aux Thucydide, aux Tite-Live, aux Tacite, etc. En général, il me semble que nos écrivains ont rarement envisagé l'histoire sous son point de vue le plus important; il me semble que cette science, traitée par des hommes de génie avec la méthode rigoureuse que l'on a déja portée dans quelques autres sciences de faits, pourroit fournir un corps complet de doctrine propre à fonder le bonheur social sur sa véritable base, c'est-à-dire sur la connoissance positive des rapports qui lient les hommes entre eux. L'histoire, présentée sous cet aspect, feroit disparoître sans retour un grand nombre de préjugés et

d'erreurs qui, jusqu'à présent, ont été adoptées et défendues même par des hommes estimables d'ailleurs par leurs talens et leurs lumières.* Et il faut bien prendre

* Parmi les erreurs accréditées depuis long-temps, l'une des plus dangereuses, à mon avis, c'est l'opinion assez généralement répandue, qu'*il faut une religion au peuple:* c'est l'expression consacrée, et qui prouve du moins que l'on n'a pas grand'chose à craindre de la religion de ceux qui s'expriment ainsi. Des gens de lettres même qui, il y a quelques années, se permettoient volontiers une innocente épigramme contre la superstition, dirigent maintenant leurs traits, plus ou moins malheureux, contre la philosophie, avec une affectation dont ce n'est pas ici le lieu d'approfondir les motifs. Il faut une religion au peuple, disent-ils, parce que la religion lui tient lieu de morale, et qu'un peuple sans morale (si même il peut en exister de pareil) seroit excessivement malheureux. Mais est-ce donc au peuple seulement que la morale est nécessaire? et les hommes élevés aux dignités, revêtus d'un grand pouvoir, et jouissant d'une influence presque sans bornes dans la société, en seront-ils dispensés? Quoi! je craindrai le misérable qui peut tout au plus me voler quelques pièces d'or, et je ne craindrai pas le magistrat corrompu qui peut ruiner vingt familles, déshonorer ou conduire au supplice un innocent; le ministre perfide qui peut livrer au fer de l'ennemi plusieurs milliers de mes concitoyens; le représentant infidèle dont les intrigues peuvent faire passer une loi désastreuse! Le philosophe ne raisonne-t-il donc pas d'une manière bien plus conséquente, lorsque, convaincu de la nécessité de la morale, non seulement pour le peuple, mais bien plus encore pour les classes qui sont ou qui se croient au-dessus du peuple, il s'applique de toutes ses forces à fonder cette morale sur la base inébranlable de l'intérêt personnel bien entendu; lorsqu'il cherche à lui donner un degré d'évidence si sensible, si palpable, pour ainsi dire, que les esprits les plus simples puissent la saisir et apprécier, d'après des règles invariables, leurs devoirs envers leurs semblables, et ce qu'ils ont droit d'en exiger? Quel bien peut-on attendre de cet alliage monstrueux de l'erreur avec la vérité? N'est-il pas évident d'ailleurs qu'en attachant les idées de la morale à des systèmes absurdes de théologie, ou à des opinions d'une métaphysique subtile et obscure, on les met à la merci du premier sophiste qui entreprendra de les détruire? Non ce n'est pas impunément et sans danger que l'on dégrade la raison humaine, et il n'y a jamais eu de religion qui n'ait produit plus ou moins ce déplorable effet. Ne nous dissimulons pas cependant que, de tous les moyens de guérir

garde que la grande et étonnante révolution qui s'est opérée dans notre système politique, et qui a encore tant de détracteurs, parce que, malheureusement, elle a fait trop de victimes, ne sera véritablement consolidée que quand ces préjugés et ces erreurs si déplorables auront fait place à la raison. Les ennemis de la liberté et du gouvernement républicain (je parle de ceux qui sont de bonne foi, et qui, plus accoutumés à sentir qu'à réfléchir, ont été égarés par le spectacle des maux dont ils ont été témoins, ou par le ressentiment des injustices qu'ils ont éprouvées,) n'ont pas vu qu'aucun de ces abus révoltans ne tenoit à la nature de la liberté et du gouvernement républicain; qu'au contraire, les auteurs de tous les crimes qui ont souillé la révolution, étoient des hommes corrompus par les habitudes de la monarchie, et qui ont porté jusque dans les premières places de la république les vues étroites, le vil esprit d'intrigue, l'égoïsme froid et cruel, en un mot, tous les vices hideux avec lesquels on se familiarise dans les gouvernemens despotiques. Combien ne devons-nous pas regretter que la génération qui s'élève ait été trop négligée peut-être sous plusieurs rapports essentiels; que la force des circonstances et la continuité de cette lutte, tantôt nécessaire et tantôt imprudente, où le peuple français s'est vu engagé avec les nations voisines, l'aient privée des institutions qui devoient préparer et assurer son bonheur, qui devoient, en un mot, la rendre plus propre à la liberté et plus digne peut-être d'en jouir que celle qui l'avoit précédée. En effet, n'a-t-on pas vu, dès les premiers jours de la révo-

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les hommes de la superstition, les persécutions sont à-la-fois le plus odieux et le plus directement contraire au but qu'on se propose; que ce moyen est d'autant plus propre à révolter les esprits éclairés et les ames généreuses, qu'il est l'arme caractéristique et exclusive des tyrans.

lution, la jeunesse prendre un caractère plus mâle, plus énergique, des habitudes plus sévères, des sentimens plus élevés, des idées plus liberales, qui jusque-là sembloient lui avoir été étrangères? Quelles armées ont jamais déployé une valeur plus brillante, plus de grandeur et de dignité dans les succès, plus de patience dans les travaux, plus de calme et de fermeté dans les revers, que les armées françaises, presque toutes composées de cette brave et généreuse jeunesse? Ah! sans doute, tout ce qu'il y a en Europe d'hommes éclairés et jaloux de leur indépendance, en voyant les miracles qu'a enfantés la liberté, ont fait des vœux pour la prospérité de cette nation, illustrée par tant et de si grands sacrifices à la cause de l'humanité. Sans doute il n'y a pas un seul homme véritablement digne de ce nom, qui ne frémisse à l'idée de voir la coalition impie et monstrueuse des tyrans conjurés contre nous, ravir à la liberté le seul asyle qui lui reste sur la terre, et replonger pour des siècles entiers, l'espèce humaine dans le chaos de misère et de barbarie dont elle commence à sortir.

Je ne crois pas avoir besoin d'excuse pour cette digression, qui paroîtra peut-être fort étrangère au sujet de mon travail, et qui, au fond, ne l'est point au but que je me suis proposé dans ce travail même. Je ne doute point sur-tout, citoyen, que vous ne me la pardonniez volontiers, si vous croyez y voir quelques vérités utiles. Eh! quel cœur véritablement français et républicain, au milieu des circonstances affligeantes et difficiles où nous ont entraînes l'impéritie de quelques hommes et la perfidie peut-être de quelques autres, pourroit ne pas se sentir incessamment ramené vers ces grands et intéressans objets? Comment détourner sa pensée de cette cause sacrée qui naguères électrisoit toutes les ames, de cette

liberté qui doit nous devenir d'autant plus précieuse que nous la voyons de toutes parts menacée, attaquée avec plus de fureur? Mais elle triomphera, n'en doutons point; elle sera impérissable comme la gloire et les efforts héroïques de nos braves guerriers, si souvent couronnés par la victoire, et des patriotes généreux qui, ainsi que vous, citoyen, se sont consacrés à sa défense dans une carrière moins brillante peut-être, et souvent non moins orageuse. . . . . .

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Salut et attachement respectueux.

THUROT.

No. III.

AVVERTIMENTO DEL TRADUTTORE.

L' Opera di cui presento al pubblico la traduzione non può a meno d'interessare la mia Patria e l'Italia tutta, come quella che ne fa risovvenire i bei giorni di Lorenzo de' Medici, pel di cui favore l'arti, le scienze, e le lettere giunsero al maggior grado di perfezione. Un'opera di questa natura, che oltre ad illustrare la vita di un uomo sì celebre comprendre l'istoria politica, e letteraria del Secolo XV dee riuscir quasi affatto nuova all' Italia, che non vanta nella propria lingua l'equivalente. Vero è che l'eruditissimo M. Fabroni ha trattato con tutta l'eleganza della lingua del Lazio il soggetto medesimo, nè dee tacerci, che lo Scrittore Inglese ha molto profittato dell' opera latina, come egli stesso ingenuamente confessa. Essa però sebben dir si possa un monumento assai apprezzabile di biografia, sì per l'eleganza dello stile, che per la forza dei sentimenti, mentre fa sommo onore al suo autore, non si rende familiare che ai dotti, e lascia agli altri un inutile desiderio della conoscenza di essa, e dell'eroe celebrato. Oltrè di che M. Fabroni servendo unicamente al suo proposito s' è limitato a ciò che illustrar poteva la vita del Magnifico Lorenzo, senza perdersi in digressioni, che diminuir potessero l'interesse, e l'effetto del suo soggetto: laddove il nostro Autore è andato spaziando in un piú vasto cerchio, ed ha compreso nel suo piano la storia di gran parte della famiglia Medicea, e di

tutto ciò che il Secolo XV produsse di grande nella italica letteratura, e nelle belle arti. Se un tal sistema non otterrà forse tutta l'approvazione dei dotti, dovrà per altro riuscire infallibilmente assai grato a coloro, che distratti da moltiplici cure, e sociali doveri, impiegar non possono tutto il lor tempo nello studio, i quali pel mezzo della lettura di quest' opera acquisteranno copiose dovizie di cognizioni, ovvie per gli eruditi, per essi certamente nuove ed interessanti. Questa è stata una delle principali ragioni che m'ha stimolato ad intraprenderne la versione, che se per avventura, comparirà soverchiamente nuda degli ornamenti di stile, ha sicuramente il merito d' esser fedele al suo originale, essendomi perfino astenuto di correggere il testo in quei pochi luoghi dove m' è sembrato, che l'Autore vada lungi dal vero; avendo io preferito di avvertirne tratto tratto il lettore con una breve annotazione. Possa questa mia fatica incontrarne il gradimento dei miei concittadini, e l'approvazione del celebre Autore Inglese, se pure vorrà egli degnarsi di gettare uno sguardo alla sua bell'opera vestita ed acconcia alla foggia italiana. Ad esso ne sia tutta la lode, e solo per me riserbi il lettore la sua gratitudine per avergliene procurato l'intelligenza.

No. IV.

Il piacere con cui ho letta la Vita di Lorenzo il Magnifico del Sig. Roscoe, e la sorpresa e maraviglia che m'ha recato il vedere in un Inglese non mai venuto in Italia tanta cognizione e sì pieno possesso della Letteratura Italiana mi fanno sperare che tale opera, coronata dagli applausi de' Letterati, otterrà nuove edizioni, e desiderare che venga in esse purgata d'alcuni lievi difetti, osservabili soltanto perchè si trovano in mezzo a tanti e sì belli pregi; nelle avvenenti bellezze si rendono sensibili i più piccioli nei. Noterò pertanto liberamente que' pochi che in una rapida lettura mi sono venuti agli occhi. Osservo che l'autore ha saviamente cercato di provvedersi d'infiniti libri Italiani, alcuni de' quali sono rarissimi anche in Italia; ma al tempo stesso sembra che manchi d'altri che sono comuni, e che sarebbono stati convenienti al suo intento: come la Storia de' Gran-Duchi di Toscana del Galuzzi, la Storia dell' Università di Pisa di Monsignor Fabroni, la Storia della Galleria di Firenze del Sig. Beniveni Pelli, l'Edizione delle Lettere Latine di Leonardo Aretino, dell' abbate Mehus; e così alcuni altri. Le memorie della Famiglia Sforza dell' abbate Ratti, distese in due Volumi in 4°, gli avrebbono fatto vedere la falsità e insussistenza della bassa origine della Casa Sforza, benchè asserita da alcuni Storici, e dalla maggior parte degli eruditi prima d'ora creduta. L'opera del Ch. abb. Simenez, Astronomo, Idrostatico,

e Meccanico ben conosciuto da' Matematici Inglesi, intitolata *del Gnomone fiorentino,* in un grosso volume 4°, gli avrebbe mostrata la vanità del vanto francese d'attribuire a M. de la Condamine la scoperta della Meridiana di Firenze fabbricata da Paolo Toscanella, mentre fu lo stesso Simenez che l'aveva scoperta molt' anni prima, e che condusse ad osservarla il Condamine. Le famose Pandette non più esistono da gran tempo nel Palazzo vecchio, dove le avrà vedute al principio del Secolo il Brakman, ma nella Biblioteca Laurenziana, dove si mostrano senz' alcun apparato di Lumi accesi; il Gibbon fece male di riportarsi, in una cosa di fatto attuale sì facile di verificarsi, ad un vecchio testimonio del principio del Secolo; nè può lodarsi il Sig. Roscoe d'aver seguito ciecamente il Gibbon, mentre avrebbe potuto informarlo assai meglio il suo amico Sig. Clarke. Il Capo V. mi sembra superiormente bene trattato; ma appunto dopo avere veduta tanta diligenza e profondità nello svolgere i meriti e l'Influenza di Lorenzo nell' avanzamento della Poesia Italiana, si desidera qualche cosa di più al venire alla Classica, che più interessa la curiosità dell' universale de' Letterati fuor dell' Italia, e che tanto dee alla Toscana ed a' Medici. Vi si trovano certamente ottime riflessioni, e alcune non comuni notizie; ma in un' Opera sì erudita e sopra una sì grande e sì importante materia s'aspetta molto di più. Le Scienze Toscane si lagneranno amichevolmente del Sig. Roscoe al vedersi trascorse sì leggermente nella dotta sua opera. Il solo Toscanella potrebbe dare materia per un bel paragrafo, e l'Opera del Simenez sul Gnomone fiorentino glien' avrebbe somministrati sufficienti materiali. Le Belle arti della Toscana chiamano forse più che le Scienze e le Lettere la curiosità de' Lettori, che resta delusa, non trovando in un' Opera sì profonda che le notizie

comuni del Vasari e dell' Etruria pittrice. La Storia della Galleria di Firenze del Sig. Pelli, le Lettere Sanesi, ed anche la Storia del Duomo d'Orvieto, del P. della Valle, la Storia della Pittura Italiana del celebre Lanzi, ed altri simili Libri glien' avrebbero date men ovvie notizie. L'amore che or regna delle Stampe e dell' erudizione calcografica sente con pena in un' Opera come questa citarsi come le prime stampe quelle della Comedia di Dante, mentre dopo La Lettera dell' abb. di S. Leger al Baron WM. tutti sanno che furono ad esse anteriori quelle dell' opera d'un Gesuito Sanese intitolata *Il Monte Santo di Dio*, ed anteriori anche a queste n' ha trovate altre il famoso De Murr, e lo stesso S. Leger n' ha scritto ancora posteriormente. Le stampe di Nielli, che ora sì cercano con avidità, avrebbono potuto occupare nel capo delle belle arti un onorevole posto. Non fanatismo religioso, ma prudenza politica e letteraria moderazione, od anzi amore della giustizia e verità, mi fanno vedere con dispiacere nel Sig. Roscoe una sfavorevole prevenzione contro il Papa, che lo fa sviare dalla Storica ed ingenua imparzialità, volendo far comparire il Papa Sisto come capo ed autore della Congiura de' Pazzi, e dell' orribile fatto della chiesa di Sta. Reparata, mentre dallo stesso Processo del Montesicco da lui riportato, si vede la pochissima parte che n' ebbe il Papa, il quale non acconsentì che al cambiamento di governo, nel che poteva non esservi alcun male; non mai allo spargimento di sangue. Alcuni forse vorrebbono una più distinta notizia dell' Accademia Platonica, de' suoi esercizi, e de' suoi frutti. La relazione delle contese de' Greci per Aristotele e per Platone potrà sembrar troppo lunga per un semplice accennamento, e troppo breve per una storica descrizione. I moderni Italiani, e molto meno gli Scrittori latini, o

altri forestieri, non diranno più Gismondo per Sigismondo. Malatesta Corvino Re d' Ungheria, celebre protettore della Letteratura, non si chiamava Matteo, ma bensì Mattia. Tiraboschi morto nella primavera del 1794 non poteva contarsi frà viventi nel 1795. Ma che sono questi piccoli falli in confronto degli eminenti pregi di ricchezza di monumenti, di copiosa e scelta erudizione, di giudiziosa critica, e d' elegante e soda eloquenza, che rendono la vita di Lorenzo il Magnifico del Sig. Roscoe un prezioso ornamento dell' Inghilterra e dell' Italia? Io me ne rallegro col dotto autore, e gli auguro salute e comodi per arricchire la Letteratura di molt' altre simili opere, e rendo i più sinceri ringraziamenti a chi m' ha facilitato la lettura di questa.

No. V.

LETTRE INÉDITE

DE LA SEIGNEURIE DE FLORENCE AU PAPE SIXTE IV :

21 *Juillet*, 1478.

La pièce suivante n'est point publiée par Fabroni, et n'a pas été connue de Roscoe.

Elle m'est tombée dans les mains pendant mon dernier voyage.

Peut-être les François, amis des lettres, me sçauront quelque gré de faire connoître un document historique, curieux, et inédit :

En le leur présentant, je saisis avec plaisir l'occasion d'exprimer ma reconnoissance envers les personnes qui ont bien voulu m'accorder, d'une manière loyale et obligeante, toute facilité de voyager pour ma santé.

FRANCIS HENRY EGERTON.

Paris,
Ce 1 *Janvier*, 1814.

L'Originale esiste nel Registro di Lettere Esterne della Republica Fiorentina, in Carta Pecora, dall' anno 1475 al 1490, a carta 52, tergo, che si conserva nell'Antico Archivio delle Riformagioni, in Firenze.

PONTIFICI MAXIMO.*

Mirati primùm* sumus, Beatissime Pater, inveteratam ad nos scribendi Summorum Pontificum consuetudinem repentè mutatam, his literis tuis, quas per præconem Calabrum afferri voluisti. Quamquam libertatis† et justitiæ, in inscriptione, subtracta nomina, satis quid sibi velint, ipsa aperiunt. Si enim quæ suades facturi fuerimus, ut nos quoque nominum talium oblivisceremur, penitùs necesse fuit. Et cur populo scribitur novo more? Et cùm ad eum scribis populum, quem ità te amare, et tantâ prosequi charitate asseris, perverso scribendi more, dilectionis etiam appellationem, a quâ, in hanc diem, solitæ sunt exordiri Pontificales veræ literæ, prætermittis? An non diligis eum populum, quem‡

* * Questa Lettera fù scritta, in replica di una che il Papa, Sisto IV, avea scritta, egli stesso, alla Republica Fiorentina, subito dopo l'affare della Congiura dei Pazzi; rimproverando i Fiorentini, e ordinando loro di scacciar Lorenzo dei Medici.

† Nella Lettera che il Papa avea, come sopra, inviata alla Republica Fiorentina, in vece della Direzione solita,

" Prioribus Libertatis,
Et Vexillifero Justitiæ,
Populo et Communi
Florentinæ."

avea omesse le parole *Libertatis* et *Justitiæ;* e non avea cominciata la Lettera con l'usata frase.

" *Dilectis in Christo Filiis.*"

‡ Tutti gli Storici Contemporanei, e i fatti seguiti contestano questa

censuris castigas talibus? quem armis tuis in viam tuam redigere conaris? Nulla profectò, si dilectionis auferas, causa restabit, cur ità persequare.

Nunc ad literas venimus. Ejicere vis nos è civitate Laurentium de Medicis: hujus autem voluntatis tuæ duas, in literis tuis, potissimùm causas colligimus: et quod tyrannus noster sit: et quod publico religionis Christianæ bono adversetur.

Quo ergò pacto, ut primam causam primùm diluamus, nos liberi erimus Laurentio ejecto, si tuo jussu, erit ejectus? Contraria tuæ literæ loquuntur, quæ, dùm libertatem pollicentur, imperando auferunt: et, ut isto te labore liberemus, ejicere nos malos cives, tyrannosque didicimus, et administrare rem nostram publicam,

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avversione del Papa Sisto IV contro i Fiorentini, il quale restò piccatissimo ancora da questa Lettera, come si vede dal seguente squarcio di una che S. S. scrisse a Federigo, Duca di Urbino, nel 25 Luglio, 1478, cioè pochi giorni dopo, e riportata da Monsignor Angelo Fabroni, Edit. in-4°, Pisis, 1784, *Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita*, Tom. II, "Adnotationes et Monumenta," p. 130.

SIXTUS PAPA IV. *Manu propriâ.*

"...La lettera dei Fiorentini, fatta con tanto dispregio di Christo e suo indegno Vicario, non terruit nos, sed fecit nos cogitare, che Dio li ha tolto l'intelletto e lo sentimento, per punirli dei suoi peccati. Speramo in Dio, de cujus honore et glorià agitur, che, vi darà in ogni cosa vittoria, potissimùm quia nostra intentio recta est et justa. Non enim agimus quicquam contra alios, nisi contra illum ingratum, excommunicatum, et hæreticum filium iniquitatis, Laurentium de Medicis: petimus a justo Deo justitiam de ipsius iniquitatibus, et vobis, tanquam a Dei ministris, ut debentibus ulcisci mala, quæ fecit contra Deum, et Ecclesiam suam, injustè, et sine causà, et cum magnà ingratitudine, quæ exiccat fontem infinitæ pietatis."

sine monitoribus. Redi paulùm ad te, Beatissime Pater, oramus: Da locum affectibus, qui sacrosanctam istam sedem, istam gravitatem, et sanctitatem pontificalem adeò decorant. Laurentium de Medicis tyrannum clamitas; at nos, populusque noster, defensorem nostræ libertatis, cum cæteris, quos tu arguis, civibus, experimur, et, unâ omnium voce, appellamus; parati, in quemcumque rerum eventum, omnia ponere pro Laurentii de Medicis salute, et civium reliquorum, in quâ quidem publicam salutem et libertatem contineri, nemo nostrûm dubitat. Quod invehuntur in Laurentium illæ literæ liberiùs, nihil est, quod contradicamus in præsentiâ: veritas ipsa satis contradicet, et tua conscientia: hoc tamen fatebimur, Beatissime Pater, movent risum omnibus nobis, tam inaniter, ne dicamus malignè, conficta audientibus. Nam quod callidè, Bartholomæi* Colleonis temporum mentionem facis, et insimulas confœderatorum nostrorum studia, non est acutiore opus interprete. Artes sunt istæ Pontificiæ Majestatis dignæ, et Vicariatûs Christi? Nos tamen etiam tùm sociorum integram fidem sumus experti, quorum auxiliis gloriosè adeò debellavimus. Nos meliùs, dictum id sit bonâ omnium veniâ, ista novimus; et Laurentium de Medicis, qui ab omni familiâ suâ, qui ab avo Cosmo, Patre patriæ nostræ, qui a Petro patre, clarissimo viro, et optimè de nostrâ libertate merito, nihil degenerat, huic civi nostro, quem, et religione verâ, et Dei cultu, et charitate, et pietate præponamus, non habemus, tu de civitate ejicere vis?

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* Si rileva da questo articolo relativo al Colleone, che Sisto IV, nella sua Lettera, spaventava i Fiorentini, con far loro credere falsi i loro Alleati, e specialmente i Veneziani; citando loro il fatto di questi ultimi, che, undici anni innanzi, licenziarono, in apparenza, Bartolomeo Colleone, loro Generale; ma, segretamente poi, li lasciarono assoldar' gente, e preparar' armi, contro i Fiorentini; come riferisce il Muratori, *Annali d' Italia*, in principio dell' anno 1467.

Movet te fortasse, et de eâ re Laurentium succenses, quòd è furentibus populi armis* Raphaëlem Cardinalem, tuum nepotem, eripi curaverit, et salvum reddiderit! Movet, quòd, trucidato Juliano, fratre, saucius ipse, divinâ potius, quam humanâ aliquâ spe, sceleratos gladios sacrilegosque parricidarum, et mortem evitaverit! Si cædi se passus sit ab missis à vobis efferatissimis satellitibus; si arcem libertatis nostræ, publicum palatium captum dolis à proditoribus vestris, non recuperassemus; si trucidandos nosmet, ac magistratus nostros, et cives tradidissemus vobis; nihil modo tecum contentionis haberemus.

Sed ut ad alteram descendamus causam: quomodò talis aliquis civis publico est, ut scribis, bono adversatus? Aliæ causæ sunt, quæ arma Christiana movent contrà Christianos, et defensionem religionis, atque expeditionem in Turchos impediunt, ut aliàs quoque Imperatorem, Ratisbonæ, eam procurantem impedierunt, in quam tamen nos publicè longas naves, et tibi, et Ferdinando regi, complures dono dedimus; et Cosmus, Laurentii avus suprascriptus, suis privatis sumptibus, Summo Pontifici unam perpulchrè armatam est elargitus; prætereà, magnam pecuniarum vim, ut pro viribus laboranti religioni nostræ succurreremus, dùm Laurentius de Medicis in urbe esset, subministravimus; et juvimus XXti florenorum millibus Ferdinandem regem,† quem

* Questo era il giovine Cardinale Legato, inviato a Firenze, in occasione della Congiura de' Pazzi; il quale Lorenzo istesso salvò a stento dalla furia del Popolo, che lo credeva complice. "Muratori." "Fabroni." "Roscoe."

† Ferdinando I, d'Aragona, Re di Napoli, trattava in segreto con Maometto II, Imperatore dei Turchi, e lo incoraggiva contro i Veneziani. I Turchi, sulla fine dell' anno antecedente, erano comparsi, all'

modò fama fert, et legatis, et muneribus conciliare sibi religionis Christianæ publicum hostem, et qui, cùm te conjunctus, modò Christianis bellum infert, dùm in limine Italiæ superbissimus ille victoriosissimusque insultat. Juvimus etiam, hortatu tuo, Matthiam Hungariæ regem; et, qui sunt nobiscum fœdere conjunctissimi, Venetis non defuimus. Ad quem multò hæc magis pertinent, pluraque majoraque non fecit: et tamen hanc causam asseris cur bellum inferas; et ità omnia jura humana divinaque confundas! Sed alia profectò, alia causa est, quæ armat te contrà Christianos, et quidem istius sacrosanctæ sedis, in quâ Vicarium Christi sedere jam oportet, præcipuos perpetuosque cultores. Ex quo in istâ sede es, quid arma tua, quid signa Pontificalia, quid Pedum istud Beati Petri, quid Navicula egerit, heu! nimis notum est: Quæ profectò, quis sit is qui publico adversetur bono, heu! nimium declarant. Nos quid egerimus pro quiete Italiæ, dùm tibi, cum sociis nostris, securitatem rerum tuarum, paulò ante, sic te rogante, promittimus: dùm* Hieronimo Comiti, nepoti tuo, dignitatem esse avitam meritissimò procuramus; sed noti nondùm erant mores perditissimi,† ac feralis,

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improvviso, nel Friuli fin presso ad Udine. " Muratori, *Annali d'Italia.*" " Sanuto, *Storia di Venezia.*"

* I Fiorentini, nel 1473, avevano coadjuvata la compra d'Imola, fatta dal Cardinale Pietro Riario, fratello del Conte, da Taddeo Manfredi, perchè divenisse uno stato patrimoniale del Conte istesso. " Muratori." " Platina."

† Questo Conte Girolamo Riario, che poi divenne ancora Signore di Forli, era colmo di tutti i vizj: Questi lo portarono poi ad essere assassinato, nel 1488, dai Forlivesi, stracchi delle sue tirannie. Sua consorte fù quella famosa Caterina Sforza, che, ritiratasi nella Rocca di Forli, minacciava strage agli uccisori del marito; ed avendo questi, per forzarla

execrandaque natura: dùm * Urbinatem ducem ad stipendia fœderis nostri traducere conamur, et eas offerimus conditiones, quæ multò suprà virtutem, et militandi, et ductandi consuetudinem essent, ut omni ex parte stabilita Italiæ pax esset, manifestatum est. Et tamen audent illæ literæ tuæ turbatorem Italicæ quietis appellare Laurentium!

Indue, indue, Beatissime Pater, meliorem mentem; memineris pastoralis officii tui, et Vicariatûs Christi; memineris clavium non in istos usus datarum. Quàm enim veremur, ne in nostra tempora illud incidat dictum Evangelicum: "*malos malè perdet, et vineam suam locabit aliis agricolis!*"

Nos certè, cum Christo Redemptore et Salvatore nostro, qui justissimam causam nostram proteget, et non deseret cultores suos sperantes in se, juvantibus sociis, et causam nostram suam causam reputantibus, juvante etiam et protegente nos † Lodovico Christianissimo Fran-

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a rendersi, mostrato di volere straziare i piccoli figli, restati in loro potere, Essa, dicesi, che sulle mura della Rocca si alzasse la veste, mostrando, che avea la forma per farne degli altri, in caso che le fossero uccisi quelli. "Muratori, *Annali d'Italia.*" "Cronica Bolognese." "Diario Sanese, nel Tom. 23, *Rerum Italicarum.*"

* Federigo I, Duca di Urbino, affezzionatissimo e caro al Papa Sisto IV. che, per lui, eresse in Ducato lo Stato di Urbino, fino allora Contea. "Sansovino *Cronologia*, a p. 67." A questo, come si vede, alla Nota No. (3), il Papa cita questa Lettera, scrittagli dai Fiorentini.

† Luigi XI, Re di Francia, che si teneva sempre bene affetti i Fiorentini, per le continue mire che avea sull' Italia, &c., si mostrò uno dei più interessati alla salute di Lorenzo. Roscoe, "*Life of Lorenzo de' Medici.*"

corum rege, perpetuo patrono, et patrę civitatis nostræ, prò religione et libertate nostrâ fortiter repugnabimus.

Vale. Die 21 *Julii,* 1478.

AYANT conçu des doutes, relativement à cette pièce de ma collection, je me suis fait faire un rapport dans l'intention de développer la vérité, avant de consacrer le document comme patrimoine légitime de l'Histoire.

FRANCIS HENRY EGERTON.

Paris,
Ce 1 *Janvier,* 1814.

RAPPORT.

J'AI très soigneusement comparé la Lettre écrite, le 21 Juillet, 1478, par la Seigneurie de Florence, au Souverain Pontife, Sixte IV, et dont M. Egerton a copie,* avec les deux pièces qui sont rapportées par Monsignor Fabroni, " *Laurentii de Medicis Magnifici Vita,*" Pisis, 1784, in 4to, tom. ii. pp. 136—66, et 166—7, la première, datée du 23 Juillet, 1478, et la seconde, sans date.

Il résulte de cet examen, qu'étant relatives aux mêmes évènemens, ces pièces conservent un fonds de ressemblance, sans offrir, néanmoins, aucun caractère d'identité.

Voyons quelles sont les différences entre la pièce du

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* [Ashridge Collection: MSS. Francis Henry Egerton. Vol. XXXIII. Letter S-1.]

21 Juillet, 1478, et celles de Monsignor Fabroni, la première, du 23 Juillet, 1478, et la seconde, sans date: pièces, sur lesquelles, à une première lecture, il étoit assez facile de concevoir des doutes.

La première pièce, du 23 Juillet, 1478, " Fabroni, tom ii. pp. 136 — 166," est un Acte du Synode, ou Assemblée du Clergé Toscan, réuni à Florence, dans l'Église Cathédrale même de Ste. Réparate,* où s'étoit commis le meurtre de Julien de Médicis. " *Florentina Synodus*," dit l'exorde, "*in luce illâ Spiritûs Sancti congregata, quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum, et revelat abscondita tenebrarum, ad perpetuum Veritatis testimonium, et Sixtianæ caliginis dissipationem. Infallibili Summi Patris, etc. Datum*," dit la dernière ligne, " *in Ecclesiâ nostrâ Cathedrali S. Reparatæ, 23 Julii*, 1478."

Ce Synode, peut-être même cet Acte, étoient l'œuvre de GENTILI, Évêque d'Arezzo, qui se proposoit d'inciter ses collégues à la provocation d'un Concile; de sauver ainsi Florence des foudres du Vatican, et son territoire de l'invasion des armées du Pape et du Roi de Naples coalisés; de rendre odieux Sixte IV; d'intéresser, enfin, au sort de sa patrie, les états voisins, et les puissances Chrétiennes, surtout l'Empereur, et le Roi de France. " *Hæc, atque his similia*," dit le même Monsignor Fabroni, tom. i. pp. 81, 82, "*clamabat* (GENTILIS, Aretinorum Pontifex), *ut collegas ad habendum Concilium invitaret, cujus decretis liberarentur Etrusci omni dirarum metû, omnesque, si fieri potuisset, ad Sixti facta, mores,*

* Aujourd'hui "*Santa Maria del Fiore*," ou plus communément, "*Il Duomo*."

faciem denique, ac nomen, a Christianâ Republicâ detestandum incitarentur. Convocatum, re verâ, hoc Concilium fuisse, in majori Florentinorum templo, plerique affirmarunt; sed ego, multis conjecturis ducor, ut credam, minimè convenisse Patres; et quæ circumferuntur hujus Synodi Acta, seu Decreta, turbulenta illa quidem, et Romano Pontifici injuriosa, GENTILI *uni, cujus profectò manu scripta sunt, tribuenda.*"

Monsieur Roscoe "*Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, London,* in 8°, *tom.* i. *p.* 281," paroît pencher en faveur de la présomption, que le document, donné pour l'Acte du Synode, y fut réellement et de fait adopté: sur son texte, qui va suivre, p. 9, lig. 25, et p. 10, lig. 1—4, il ajoute, en note, "*Fabroni conjectures that this convocation was not held, but, for this opinion, he adduces no reasons: and other historians have related it as a well known circumstance. Some doubt may perhaps remain whether the document, purporting to be the Act of the Synod, was in fact adopted there, or whether it was merely proposed for the approbation of the assembly; though the presumption is in favor of the former opinion. For producing a document addressed in such contumelious terms to the head of the church, Fabroni thinks it necessary to apologize: 'Vererer reprehensionem prudentum quod talia, injuriosa sanè Sixto Pontifici, ediderim, nisi Historici munus esset referre omnia quæ dicta et acta sunt.* Fab. in vitâ Laur., tom. ii. p. 136.' *Happily I can lay this piece before my readers without a similar precaution.*" V. App. No. XXVIII.

Cet Acte, enfin, expositif des faits, qui ont précédé, accompagné, et suivi, la conspiration dite des *Pazzi*, n'émane point de la Seigneurie de Florence, *qui auroit*

pu le désavouer, mais d'une section du Peuple Florentin, et peut-être d'un seul Prélat, ami, et créature, de Laurent de * Médicis, lequel Laurent n'étoit pas la République. Il n'a aucun caractère officiel; il ne s'adresse, ni ne répond à personne, mais à tous; aussi, n'est-il point consigné dans les Archives, (*v.* 1°, *p.* 11,) de la République, mais dans les Archives, (*v.* 2° *p.* 11,) particulières des Médicis; " in *Tabulariô Mediceô*," dit Fabroni.

La pièce du 21 Juillet, 1478, est au contraire, une Lettre officielle, qui émane d'une source pure et authentique, où Monsignor Fabroni a puisé lui-même,† à la même époque; c'est-à-dire des Anciennes Archives, (*v.* 1°, *p.* 11,) de la Seigneurie de Florence, dites " *Delle*

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* Gentili d'Urbino avoit été précepteur de Laurent de Médicis, et lui étoit redevable de l'évêché d'Arezzo. " Cùm vix *(Laurentius)* a latere discederet præceptoris sui Gentilis Urbinatis; viri, et doctrinæ, et morum laude, insignis, quem postea Aretinæ Ecclesiæ præficiendum curavit, etc."—Fabroni, même édition, tom. i. pp. 4—5.

† Monsignor Fabroni a eu la plus grande facilité de puiser lui-même dans toutes les Archives publiques conservées à Florence, avant, comme après, être devenu Curateur de l'Académie de Pise. Il avoit résidé nombre d'années à Florence. Il a toujours été en rapport d'intimité avec les deux Conservateurs, tant des *Archives de la République de Florence*, que de *celles de la Famille des Medicis*, à chacun desquels il adresse des remerciments publics dans sa Préface. Il avoit coutume d'aller souvent de Pise à Florence; villes, dont la distance n'est que d'une petite journée; il étoit très bien en Cour, et y fréquentoit, avec plus d'assiduité encore, pendant les mois d'hyver qu'elle passoit ordinairement à Pise: il étoit même si bien en Cour, qu'il visoit à devenir Instituteur de l'Archiduc Ferdinand, et de ses frères: il avoit, enfin, beaucoup d'obligations au Grand Duc Léopold; et c'est au frère de ce Prince, à l'Empereur Joseph II, qu'il a dédié sa *Vie de Laurent de Médicis*. Il tenoit de Rome la Prélature; et l'on assure, qu'il avoit des vues sur le Cardinalat.

Riformagioni," Registre en parchemin "*di Lettere Esterne della Republica Fiorentina, dall' anno* 1475, *al* 1490." Elle est adressée, par les Prieurs de la Liberté, et Gonfalonier de Justice, de cet État, au Pape, Sixte IV, directement, pour réplique à une lettre de Sa Sainteté, qui paroît avoir précédé le Bref, auquel répond la seconde pièce, sans date, publiée par Monsignor Fabroni, tom. ii. p. 166—7, même édition.

Ces différences, quant à la forme, sont sans doute assez grandes pour détruire l'identité, et même pour infirmer la ressemblance.

C'est ici le lieu d'observer deux inexactitudes, qui se trouvent dans la partie du texte de Monsieur Roscoe, de laquelle il s'agit, "*Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, London*, in 8°, 1800, *vol.* i. *p.* 281."

La première est, que, dans la note rapportée ci-dessus, p. 8, lig. 29—30, Monsieur Roscoe dit, "*a document addressed in such contumelious terms, etc. v.* tom. i. p. 281, même édition." Il eût été plus précis de tourner autrement la phrase, et de dire, par exemple, "*a document containing such contumelious terms, etc.*" d'autant que, dans le texte, ou dans les annotations, de Monsignor Fabroni, on ne rencontre, non plus que dans l'acte, rien qui autorise à affirmer, que cette pièce fut adressée au Pape. Il est vrai que l'acte du Synode Florentin étoit dirigé contre Sixte IV; mais, il n'y est parlé que de lui, et non à lui; car, le peu de lignes qui, dans ce long document émané du clergé Toscan, lui pourroient paroître adressées, ne le sont que par apostrophe, et figurément.

La seconde est, que, Monsieur Roscoe dit, *v.* tom. i. p. 281, même édition, "*By the exertions of Gentile d'Urbino, bishop of Arezzo, a convocation was summoned in the church of the Reparata, and Fabroni has produced, from the* Archives of Florence, *a document yet remaining in the hand-writing of Gentile, which purports to be the result of the deliberations which there took place.*" Il seroit à desirer, qu'en citant Fabroni, sur le dépôt d'où fut extrait l'acte du Synode Florentin, au lieu de dire "*des Archives de Florence,*" (*v.* 3, *p.* 11,) Monsieur Roscoe eût dit "*des Archives des Médicis,*" comme l'a dit Monsignor Fabroni, "*Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita,*" Pisis, 1784, in 4°, tom. ii. p. 136, note (93) mise en tête de l'acte dont il est ici question; "*ejus auctographum asservatur in* Tabulario Mediceo; *quod exscribendum duximus, propterea quia ab eo plurimum differunt, quæ de hac Synodo edita sunt.*" On n'auroit pas été exposé à considérer comme extrait des *Archives de Florence* (*v.* 3°, *p.* 11,) ce qui l'étoit des *Archives* (*v.* 2°, *p.* 11)* *de la famille des Médicis.* Même, après que Cosme de Médicis eut été investi de la souveraineté de Toscane, évènement postérieur de plusieurs années, ni les Archives de l'ancienne République, ni celles de la famille des

* La famille de Médicis étoit, il est vrai, la plus puissante de la cité; mais, elle n'en étoit pas moins toujours comprise dans la classe des Citoyens.

A cette époque, elle occupoit son Hôtel particulier, dit aujourd'hui, "*Palazzo Riccardi,*" où furent ramenés, de la Cathédrale qui en étoit, alors, comme à présent, voisine, Laurent de Médicis blessé, et le cadavre de Julien son frère, après l'attentat des Pazzi.

Ce Palais avoit été édifié par Cosme, le Pere de la Patrie, d'après les dessins de Michelozzo, et fut acheté en 1659, du Grand Duc Ferdinand II, par le marquis Riccardi, autre particulier, pour 41,000 scudi.

Medicis, n'ont jamais été fondues en un seul et même corps; mais elles ont toujours formé, chacune, un corps distinct, et séparé : quant aux Archives de Florence, elles ont toujours occupé un local différent, et particulier. C'est donc s'énoncer d'une manière vague et incorrecte, que dire extrait des *Archives* (*v.* 3°, *p.* 11,) *de Florence,* ce qui, réellement et de fait, l'a été de *Celles,* (*v.* 2°, *p.* 11,) *des Médicis : (in* "Tabulario Mediceo.") Cette locution de Monsieur Roscoe est inexacte sous tous les rapports; et donne lieu à confondre des dépôts essentiellement distincts, ainsi que les diverses conséquences en résultantes.

La distinction se trouve établie dans tous les documents que Monsieur Roscoe lui-même a publiés: "*Ad Ædes Mediceas* sugendo vulneri ob veneni suspicionem amici dant operam: Ad Palatium, ad effringendum, &c." dit Bartholomæus Scala, Cancel. Florentinus: Roscoe, même edition, vol. iii. p. 220. "*Ad Medicum Ædes,*" "*Medica Domus,*" "*In Medicum Domum,*" dit Angelus Politianus: Roscoe, tom. iii. pp. 136, *bis,* et 137. Enfin, elle est établie par tous les écrivains du temps. Bien plus, elle est très attentivement définie dans la préface *Ad Lectorem,* de Monsignor Fabroni, *Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita,* pp. vii et viii, où il rend graces aux personnes, qui, alors, étoient préposées à la garde, l'une, des *Archives de la république de Florence,* et l'autre, de *celles de la famille des Medicis,* "... quod cùm alter *Reipublicæ Florentinæ,* alter *Mediceæ familiæ Tabulariis* præsint, &c."

Mais, comme, en toute la contexture de ce rapport, je pese sur bien des choses, ou, je fais une allusion directe

à plusieurs points, mis en avant, par Monsignor Fabroni, dans sa préface, qu'il me soit permis d'en transcrire une grande partie.

"... *Multi quidem extiterunt qui de illo (Laurentio Medici) scripsêre, sed perpauci separatim, hique ita jejunè, ut non arrogantiæ coarguendus sim, si, rerum copiâ, scribendique arte, eos me superaturum confidam. Magnæ &c.... Sed hæc et his similia, dum nos explicabimus, utcumque judicata erunt, non magnoperè laborabimus, eâ gloriâ contenti, quod in narrandis rebus incorrupta rerum gestarum monumenta secuti fuerimus. Ex his secundum operis volumen conflabitur: quodque eorum pleraque asserventur in Florentino Tabulario, quod Mediceum, vel* Segreteria Vecchia, *appellari solet, quæ nominamus volumina, seu* Filze, *ad illud spectare existimabis. Quod ad numerandi, &c.... Reliquum esset ut de genere pecuniæ &c... pauca dicerem, nisi res, multis sanè involuta difficultatibus, omninò a doctis viris illustrata fuisset, maximèque a Josepho Francisco Pagninio, cui, ut et Ranuccio Galutio plurimum me debere profiteor, quod cum alter Reipublicæ Florentinæ, alter Mediceæ familiæ Tabulariis præsint, vel occultissima pro illorum singulari humanitate patefacere mihi non dubitarunt. Vale.*"

Au surplus, il ne sera point mal-à-propos de pousser plus avant cette digression, et de montrer ce que fut autrefois, ce qu'est aujourd'hui, l'état des diverses archives conservées à Florence:

Florence étoit, de toutes les villes d'Italie, si l'on excepte Rome, celle qui avoit les Archives les plus étendues, et les mieux soignées: la Seigneurie fut toujours animée d'un esprit conservateur des chartes anciennes,

et des pièces relatives, tant à son administration, qu'à ses rapports avec les Puissances: cet esprit fut constamment celui des Medicis, qui, avant, comme après être devenus Grands Ducs, ont toujours donné les plus grands soins à la conservation des documents.

Chaque département politique avoit ses Archives: voici, celles qui se distinguoient de toutes les autres par l'importance des pièces:

1°, *Archivio delle Riformagioni*, où sont comprises:
- 1°. *Archivio delle Riformagioni*, proprement dites, ou, Archives de l'ancienne République.
- 2°. *Archivio dei Confini.*
- 3°, *Archivio Genealogico*, ou, de la Noblesse: *I Libri d'Oro.*

2°. *Archivio Mediceo*, ou, de la Famille des Médicis. Ces Archives, depuis qu'elles ont été annexées à celles de l'ancienne Secrétairerie, portent aussi le nom de *Segretcria Vecchia*, où sont comprises:
- 1°. *Archivio Mediceo*, ou, Archives domestiques de la Famille des Médicis.
- 2°. Archives *della Segreteria Vecchia*, comprenant les Pièces relatives à l'administration de l'Etat, de l'Intérieur, des Finances, &c. durant la Dynastie des Médicis.

3°. *Archivio di Firenze*, ou, Archives de Florence, ou, *Archivio Generale*, ou tout simplement, *Archivio.*

I. Dans les premières, se trouvent les pièces afférentes au gouvernement de l'ancienne république, et, en outre, diverses pièces qui avoient rapport au gouvernement, pendant la dynastie des Médicis, mais, qui n'étoie pas censées appartenir à la cathégorie des papiers

de famille; telles, par exemple, que les négociations de ces Princes, pour obtenir la *Lunigiana*, et quelques territoires limitrophes, qui étoient à leur convenance. On y trouve, aussi, revêtus du seing des commissaires respectifs des parties intéressées, les contrats, actes, ou documents quelconques, relatifs à la démarcation des confins, entre la Toscane, et les états voisins, en divers temps; ainsi que les plans, et dessins, des territoires dont il y est traité, et qui en forment partie intégrante; comme, encore, les correspondances et les négociations concernant la juriſdiction territoriale: Ces dernières pièces constituoient une division à part, sous le nom d'*Archivio dei confini*. On y trouve, enfin, l'*Archivio Genealogico*, qui renferme les *Libri d'Oro*, ou grands registres généalogiques et authentiques des familles patriciennes, et nobles, de Florence, et des autres villes, qualifiées nobles, de la Toscane; *&c. &c. &c.* Les Archives *delle Riformagioni* déposées d'abord au *Palazzo Vecchio*, ou, Palais de la Seigneurie, sur la place du Grand Duc, furent depuis transportées dans l'édifice *degli Uffizi*, que Cosme I. avoit fait construire.

II. La collection de tous les papiers, chartes, et autres instruments quelconques, qui concernoient les affaires particulières, et les transactions domestiques des Médicis, soit lorsqu'ils étoient simples citoyens de la république, soit après qu'ils furent devenus Grands Ducs de Toscane, constituoit les Archives dites, *Archivio Mediceo*: Là, se conservent leur correspondance épistolaire avec les Puissances, les réponses qui y furent faites, et les documents relatifs aux sommes prêtées par la maison de Médicis à divers potentats, les contrats de mariage, testaments, et autres Pièces de Famille. Celles-ci, originairement déposées dans l'ancien Palais des Médicis,

actuellement connu sous le nom de *Palazzo Riccardi*, dans la Via Larga, furent transportées au *Palazzo Vecchio*, sous Cosme I. Grand Duc de Toscane; et ont été annexées, par le Grand Duc Léopold, aux Archives connues sous la dénomination de *Segreteria Vecchia*, lesquelles comprenoient les pièces relatives à l'administration de l'état, de l'intérieur, et des finances, durant la dynastie des Médicis. L'une, et l'autre, des Archives comprises dans cette seconde division, sont, maintenant, dans le bâtiment *degli Uffizj*, au premier étage, du côté de la rivière de l'Arno.

III. Toutes les pieces qui servent à constater l'état civil, et les propriétés des citoyens, les mariages, les testaments, les ventes, les donations, les dotations, et, enfin, tous actes par-devant notaires, forment, sous le nom d'*Archivio di Firenze*, ou, *Archives de Florence*, la troisième de ces collections. Celle-ci, fondée vers l'année 1569, a été, et se trouve encore, depuis cette date, dans les salles qui sont au dessus de l'église d'*Or-San-Michele*, édifice d'une solide construction gothique, et parfaitement isolé pour le garantir des incendies.

Excepté une partie des autres Archives, que le Grand Duc Léopold regardoit comme superflue, celles qui étoient vraiment importantes, furent non seulement conservées, mais encore disposées dans un meilleur ordre: il est à regretter, cependant, que les personnes qu'il employa au triage des pieces de ces Archives, en ayent condamné plusieurs, qui, de peu de valeur à leurs yeux, pouvoient, néanmoins, en avoir beaucoup pour l'histoire, la politique, la diplomatie, et l'économie publique.

Lorsqu'on ne distingue pas ces trois Archives, on

confond tout; on donne des renseignements inexacts; et, on s'expose à des bévues sur les pieces que chacune d'elles renferme.

Certes, on ne peut se dissimuler que, tout historien de la vie de Laurent de Médicis auroit dû avoir une connoissance précise, claire, et absolue, de l'état, où furent autrefois, et où sont aujourd'hui, les diverses Archives conservées à Florence. Monsieur Roscoe ne paroît pas avoir eu des notions assez précises sur la distinction qui a existé de tout temps, et qui existe encore, entre ces différentes Archives, pour en parler avec une parfaite exactitude: Les Archives de l'ancienne république, et celles de la famille des Médicis, n'ont jamais été fondues en un seul et même corps; mais elles ont toujours formé, chacune, un corps distinct et séparé: quant aux *Archives de Florence*, *Archivio di Firenze*, elles ont toujours occupé un local différent, et particulier (*v.* iii. *p.* 12): c'est ainsi que, pour n'avoir point posé cette distinction d'une manière correcte, Monsieur Roscoe devient inexact; et donne lieu à confondre des dépôts essentiellement distincts, ainsi que les diverses conséquences en résultantes. Il publie l'acte du Synode de Florence, du 23 Juillet, 1478, dans son Appendix, N°. XXVIII, "*Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*," *London*, in 8°, 1800, *vol.* i. *p.* 281, et dit, qu'il le donne d'après Monsignor Fabroni: Monsignor Fabroni dit, "*Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita*," Pisis, 1784, in 4°. tom. ii. p. 136, note (93,) (*v. p.* 10, *lig.* 7—9 *de ce Rapport*) l'avoir extrait des ARCHIVES DE MEDICIS, où cet acte est réellement déposé (in "*Tabulario Mediceo.*")· Monsieur Roscoe dit, que Monsignor Fabroni l'a extrait des ARCHIVES DE FLORENCE: Monsignor *Fabroni*, dit-il, "*Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*," London, in 8°. 1800, vol. i. p. 281,

has produced from the Archives of Florence a document, &c.

Monsieur Roscoe tombe dans cette *seconde* inexactitude, quoique les divers documents que lui-même a publiés de Bartholomeus Scala, d'Angelus Politianus, et de plusieurs autres écrivains, dussent lui avoir montré, avec autant de clarté que de précision, cette distinction, et la différence qui en étoit faite. C'est, donc, par toutes les raisons qui viennent d'être exprimées, que la locution de Monsieur Roscoe est inexacte; qu'il s'énonce d'une manière vague et incorrecte, et qu'il se laisse entraîner dans cette *seconde* inexactitude, qui se trouve dans la partie de son texte, de laquelle il s'agit, *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, London*, in 8°, *vol.* i. *p.* 281.

De nos jours, toutes les Archives devoient être transportées ailleurs; mais, à force de représentations, l'on est parvenu à les conserver dans la ville de Florence. Cette resolution ayant été adoptée dans le courant des années 1810, 1811, les Archives, distinguées par l'importance des pieces, et plusieurs autres, à l'exception *dell' Archivio di Firenze,* mentionné ci-dessus, et *dell' Archivio Diplomatico,** ont été transférées au premier étage

* On n'a point parlé ci-dessus, de l'*Archivio Diplomatico.* C'est un établissement dont la Toscane est redevable au Grand Duc Léopold. Il y fit rassembler toutes les chartes, qui provenoient de la suppression des Monasteres, et de plusieurs couvens: Elles contiennent, pour la plupart, des legs, et des donations, que la république, le Prince, ou les particuliers, leur avoient faits. A l'époque de la fondation de l'*Archivio Diplomatico,* le Grand Duc Léopold fit inviter tous les particuliers de l'état qui avoient des anciennes chartes, ou parchemins, à les déposer dans ces Archives: Quelques uns s'y prêterent; d'autres aime-

degli Uffizi, classées, chacune, par ordre de matières; et, il en a été dressé des catalogues raisonnés.

Passons, maintenant, à l'examen du fonds.

La première piece de Monsignor Fabroni, du 23 Juillet, 1478, tom. ii. pp. 136—166, est longue de trente pages in 4°, et n'a de commun avec celle du 21 Juillet, 1478, que l'énonciation des faits, qui n'ont pu varier; mais avec quelle différence de style, quoiqu'aussi véhémente! Deux ou trois de ces pages sont employées à présenter, sous un point de vue général, tout ce qu'osoit Sixte IV, pour la fortune de ses † neveux, et surtout

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rent mieux conserver ces titres généalogiques, et domestiques. Lors de la dernière suppression générale des ordres religieux, il a encore été versé une quantité très considérable de chartes, et de diplômes, dans ces Archives, qui se trouvent placées au premier étage *degli Uffizj*, en montant le grand escalier de la galerie. De ces diverses réunions, il a résulté, que l'*Archivio Diplomatico* renferme au-delà de trente mille chartes, parchemins, ou diplômes. Mais, attendu que ces pieces ne sont pas du ressort de la diplomatie, proprement dite, on n'a point considéré ce dépôt comme relatif à l'objet du présent rapport.

Outre l'*Archivio Diplomatico*, il y avoit encore plusieurs autres Archives, telles que les Archives *del Regio Diritto*, ou, de la jurisdiction du Prince sur les affaires ecclésiastiques; les Archives *della Camera delle Comunità*, ou, des communes de l'état; les Archives *della Decima*, ou, de l'impôt territorial; les Archives *della Segreteria Nuova*, ou, des pieces relatives à l'administration de l'état, de l'intérieur, des finances, &c. postérieurement à la dynastie des Médicis; les Archives des différentes branches de la régie, comme sel, tabac,.&c.; les Archives des tribunaux civils, et criminels; *&c. &c. &c.*

† C'est une chose très obscure que l'origine de Sixte IV, et ses relations de parenté avec les Riario:

pour celle du vicieux Comte Jérôme Riario, que les Florentins avoient aidé à devenir Seigneur d'Imola: on y démontre que ce Pape fut l'instigateur et le directeur de la conspiration des Pazzi; on y développe tout l'odieux de l'interdit de la république de Florence, et de l'invasion de son territoire, sous des prétextes aussi ridicules que la résistance des citoyens aux sicaires du Saint Père; l'insuffisance des magistrats pour dérober à la juste fureur du peuple un prélat indigne, que les loix générales auroient non moins sévèrement puni; et la détention salutaire, autant que douce, du Cardinal Raphaël, arrière

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Si l'on en croit *Platine*, Bibliothécaire du Vatican, et Historiographe Pontifical, qui devoit ces titres et son existence à Sixte IV, le père de ce Pape étoit issu de l'antique famille Piémontoise *Della Rovere:* le père de Jérôme Riario qui ne fut qualifié *Comte*, que depuis l'exaltation de S. S., avoit épousé une cousine, ou sœur (*consobrina*) du S. Père; laquelle avoit donné le jour, entre autres, à Raphaël Riario, qui, dès la sixième année du Pontificat de son oncle, réel, ou à la mode de Bretagne, fut fait Cardinal, quoiqu'à peine adolescent.

Si l'on en croit Etienne d'*Infessura*, Secrétaire (*scriba*) du Sénat, et du Peuple Romain, et Historien, aussi contemporain, Sixte IV, dont le nom étoit *De Ruere*, et qui, même étant Général des Franciscains, n'en n'avoit encore d'autre que celui de *Maître François, de Savone*, étoit né dans l'obscurité, avoit été élevé par charité dans un couvent de son ordre, et s'étoit avancé par ses talens, plus que distingué par ses mœurs. Le premier de ses neveux paternels, qu'il fit, en 1472, Préfet de Rome, n'étoit auparavant connu que sous le nom de *Léonard, de Savone.* La filiation du Cardinal Raphaël étoit fort problématique, et on le soupçonnoit tenir de plus près au Souverain Pontife; dont, en effet, l'excessive partialité pour cette famille, préférablement à celle de son frère, a toujours paru fort extraordinaire. Ce dernier écrivain, en parlant du Comte Jérome Riario, oncle, convenu des deux parts, de Raphaël, le qualifie " *Figlio, Nipote, o attinente di Papa Sisto . . . .*"

Plusieurs contemporains d'une grande autorité, l'acte même du synode Florentin du 23 Juillet, 1478, Bonanni, Bayle, de Thou, et autres écrivains du premier rang, appuient les assertions d'Etienne d'*Infessura*.

neveu de Sa Sainteté, laquelle en avoit tellement reconnu le mérite, qu'elle en avoit fait remercier solennellement la Seigneurie. Six autres pages présentent, par fragmens, la confession libre de Jean Baptiste de Montesicco, principal entremetteur de tout le complot, laquelle dévoile tous les procédés qu'y avoit tenus le Saint Père; et chacun de ces fragmens est accompagné de commentaires justificatifs. Viennent, ensuite, dix huit pages de répliques des Florentins aux griefs à eux-imposés par le Pape, au nombre de onze, savoir: 1°, d'avoir assisté Nicolas Vitelli; 2°. d'avoir pratiqué sur Pérouse; 3°. d'avoir secouru Montone; 4°. d'avoir appelé le fameux Condottiere Deiphébe de Anguillara; 5°. d'avoir entrepris sur Cisterna; 6°. d'avoir enlevé les voyageurs allant à Rome; 7°. d'avoir mis en mer des Pirates; 8°. d'avoir refusé à Francesco Salviati la mise en possession du Siege de Pise; 9°. d'avoir souffert que ce même Archevêque, sujet Toscan, fut pendu tumultuairement; 10. d'avoir détenu Raphaël Riario, son neveu, Cardinal, du titre de St. Georges ad Velabrum, compromis par les conspirateurs, sauvé, et rendu, par la Seigneurie. Le tout est terminé par une comparaison de la conduite des Florentins, et de celle de Sixte IV; ainsi que par l'exposition, et l'adoption, des moyens les plus propres à réprimer ce Pontife, qui sont, la convocation d'un concile, et un appel à la puissance des états alliés, surtout de l'Empereur, et du roi de France.

La lettre du 21 Juillet, 1478, quoique plus courte des trois quarts, contient néanmoins, l'énonciation, sommaire à la vérité, de la majeure partie de ces faits, et même plus: mais, avec le plus grand avantage; puisque, plus le cadre d'une pensée, ou d'un récit, est resserré, plus l'expression acquiert de force et de coloris.

Il faut donc convenir, que, dissemblable, et préférable, tant pour la forme, que pour le fonds, la lettre de M. Egerton, du 21 Juillet, 1478, l'emporte, sous tous les rapports, sur la première piece publiée par Monsignor Fabroni, et datée du 23 Juillet, 1478; quand la préférence ne seroit point déjà fondée, sur ce que la sienne est directe, et de Puissance à Puissance, plus authentique, et émanée de sources plus incontestables.

Quant aux différences entre cette même lettre du 21 Juillet, 1478, et la seconde pièce, sans date, de Monsignor Fabroni, tom. ii. pp. 166-7., elles sont encore plus saillantes. Les caractères d'authenticité annexés à celle-là, sont omis à celle-ci: l'accusé de réception des lettres du Pape, varie essentiellement dans ces deux réponses des Florentins: l'une, assez longue, abondante en faits, et forte d'expressions, est une réplique vigoureuse à une aggression de mauvaise foi; l'autre, courte, dénuée de faits, et conçue en termes circonspects, est une réponse mesurée à un Bref du Pape, qui pouvoit être venu, dans l'intervalle du 21 Juillet, 1478, à la date quelconque de cette dernière lettre, et contenoit, peut-être, des motifs qui en justifient la modération. C'est ce qu'on peut induire de la comparaison de ces deux diverses pieces, l'une du 21 Juillet, 1478, et l'autre, sans date, de Monsignor Fabroni; et même de l'intitulé de cette dernière, qui est, "*in calce Auctographi. Pro Dominis Responsio Brevi.*"

Bien plus, il suffit de lire avec attention le fragment cité, en la note (3) ci-dessus, p. 4, d'une Lettre écrite (*de Rome*), le 25 Juillet, 1478, par Sixte IV, à Frédéric, Duc d'Urbin, pour se convaincre que, ni sa date, ni ses expressions, ne peuvent s'appliquer, ni à la première pièce rap-

portée par Monsignor Fabroni, dont l'arrêté n'est que du 23 Juillet, 1478, ni à la seconde piece "*in calce Auctographi. Pro Dominis Responsio Brevi,*" publiée, sans date, par Monsignor Fabroni, tom. ii. p. 166—7;. tandis qu'elles coïncident avec celles de la lettre du 21 Juillet, 1478.

En effet, si l'on observe les dates, la lettre publiée par Monsignor Fabroni, tom. ii. p. 166—7. n'en présentant aucune, perd, par cela même, beaucoup de son autorité: quant à l'acte du synode, indépendamment de ce que rien ne laisse présumer qu'il ait été adressé au Pape, sa date, du 23 Juillet, 1478, ne permet guere de supposer qu'il ait pu motiver la lettre, écrite, le 25 suivant, par Sa Sainteté, au Duc d'Urbin; puisque la distance de Florence à Rome, par les deux routes, est telle, que, difficilement, le laps de temps écoulé entre l'une, et l'autre, de ces dernières dates, eût suffi pour la franchir; tandis que, la lettre du 21 Juillet, 1478, offre un intervalle double, et plus que suffisant.

Si l'on considère les expressions, la lettre donnée, sans date, par Monsignor Fabroni, tom. ii. pp. 166—7. ne contient que des paroles mitigées, ne présente rien qui justifie le ressentiment exprimé par le Saint Père, dans sa lettre au Duc d'Urbin; quoique, par fois ironique, le style en est réservé; tandis que celle du 21 Juillet, 1478, est d'un style bien capable de provoquer la colère de Sixte IV, déjà exaspéré d'avoir manqué son entreprise sur Florence, et contre les Médicis.

Mais, pourquoi, Monsignor Fabroni a-t-il passé sous silence cette lettre du 21 Juillet, 1478, tirée d'un dépôt, où il a puisé lui-même, tandis que, sur le même sujet, sur

les mêmes faits, il en a donné tant d'autres, de bien moindre valeur, de bien moindre intérêt, et, surtout, moins directs à la chose, et moins propres à développer ce point d'histoire? Pourquoi la date de celle qu'il a donnée, tom. ii. p. 166—7, sous le titre, "*in calce Auctographi. Pro Dominis Responsio Brevi,*" ne s'y trouve-t-elle point, si toutefois elle existe à l'original? Pourquoi, lorsqu'il reconnoît que plusieurs historiens ont affirmé la tenue du concile de Florence, se dit-il conduit, par des conjectures, à croire que "*minimè convenisse Patres?*" Pourquoi, sur un fait aussi grave, et d'un application aussi étendue que l'existence d'un concile, n'oppose-t-il que des conjectures encore, dont il garde le secret, aux assertions d'écrivains, la plupart contemporains? (*Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita*, pag. 82. *lig.* 5—6. et ci-dessus, pag. 8. *lig.* 17—21.) Pourquoi a-t-il atténué, et toujours par des conjectures, l'authenticité présumée des actes, ou décrets, du synode provocatif de ce concile? Pourquoi n'a-t-il point donné mieux à connoître l'*Autographe*, à la fin duquel, il dit se trouver sa Lettre sans date; puisqu'elle ne peut s'appliquer, sous aucun rapport, à l'*Original* qui la précède immédiatement, c'est-à-dire à l'acte du synode, dont les auteurs, la matière, et le style, different si essentiellement? Pourquoi, se dissimulant l'insignifiance de cette lettre, ainsi dénuée de tous les caractères, qui auroient pu en déterminer les rapports, n'a-t-il point suppléé, ne fût-ce que par des conjectures, à cette omission, soit de lui, soit des registres de la Seigneurie, ou des Médicis, puisque l'intitulé n'est dans aucune forme du protocole usité, puisque l'absence de la date, de l'adresse, et des signatures, en fait non seulement suspecter l'authenticité, mais acheve de détruire le peu de cohérence qu'il semble avoir eu dessein d'établir entre ces deux pieces?

Monsignor Fabroni a certainement eu communication des documents rassemblés dans les anciennes Archives, "*delle Riformagioni,*" à Florence; c'est ce que prouve, d'une manière sans réplique, l'insertion de quantité de pieces qui en sont extraites, dans son ouvrage ci-dessus cité, tom. ii. "*Adnotationes et Monumenta.*" (*v.* aussi la note 4, p. 9, la p. 10, *lig.* 25—29. et la p. 11. *lig.* 6—9. *de ce Rapport.*)

S'il paroissoit extraordinaire, qu'il n'ait point publié cette lettre du 21 Juillet, 1478, quoiqu'il dût en avoir connoissance, il seroit possible de trouver la clef du silence résultant de cette suppression, dans ses propres paroles: "*Vererer reprehensionem prudentum quod talia . . . . . ediderim, . . .*" (*v.* p. 8, *lig.* 30—31, *ci-dessus.*)

Plusieurs personnes pourroient même penser que cet historien n'a point rapporté l'entière vérité, quoique ses propres expressions démontrent, qu'il avoit une parfaite connoissance du devoir de l'historien: "*Historici munus est,*" dit-il, "*referre omnia . . .*" *v. p.* 8, *lig.* 31—32 *ci-dessus.*)

Mais l'histoire s'écrit, quelquefois, d'une manière artificieuse: l'esprit de parti, les préjugés, l'intérêt, les opinions sur ce qu'on appelle prudence, et quantité d'autres motifs, font altérer, mutiler, ou supprimer des documents authentiques, des autorités certaines, et des faits évidents: tantôt, la paresse l'emporte, tantôt, la négligence; un historien en copie un autre, et ne se donne point la peine, ou ne se soucie guères, de recourir aux pieces originales.

Le public est ainsi abusé par le pervertissement des

caractères, des incidents, et des faits: l'Erreur se pare, à la dérobée, des vêtements purs de la Vérité, affecte une importance fictive, et, remplie de fausses prétentions, s'arroge les apparences imposantes du vrai: l'usurpatrice couvre d'un voile le front noble et sévère de la Vérité: l'Histoire, dénuée de la véracité historique, devient "*a tale to be told*," un commérage: elle est forcée de se dégrader, de dévier de son grand et propre objet, et de dégénérer en quelque chose, en je ne sais quoi, ἐς μὲν ἀκρόασιν ἴσως, καὶ μυθῶδες, καὶ μὴ ἀτερπίστερον.

No. VI.

OSSERVAZIONI

DEL CONTE CAV. LUIGI BOSSI,

TRADUTTORE ITALIANO DELLA VITA DI LEONE X.

SULLE DUE DISSERTAZIONI DI POMPILIO POZZETTI SOPRA ALCUNI PASSI DELLA VITA DI LORENZO DE' MEDICI DETTO IL MAGNIFICO SCRITTA DAL SIG. ROSCOE.

I. NON è mio disegno di prendere in questo luogo le difese del Sig. Roscoe contro le censure sopra il medesimo portate dal Pozzetti; nè sarebbe questo il luogo di intraprendere una tale giustificazione, trattandosi di tutt' altra opera, che questa non è, e di un' opera altresì a questa anteriore, e della quale il pubblico ha già formato un perfetto giudizio.

II. Non dissimulerò pure, che in alcuna cosa si è bene apposto il Pozzetti, giacchè impossibile riusciva, che in un' opera così grandiosa, scritta ad una grande distanza dall' Italia, non cadesse qualche errore di nome, e di data; che egli merita molta lode per la urbanità, e gentilezza, colla quale ha esposto in più luoghi il suo dissenso, e che egli è pure commendevole per uno zelo di-

mostrato costantemente per la gloria del nome Italiano. Meno grato gli sarà il Sig. Roscoe per averlo fatto gratuitamente dottore, come altri avea voluto farlo Ministro del Santo Vangelo. Vedasi la mia prefazione al Volume viii. di questa traduzione.

III. Io non avrei fatto alcun cenno di queste dissertazioni, estranee, come mostra il loro titolo, al mio argomento; se alcuni punti di storia, o di critica, presi in esame dal Pozzetti, non avessero una mediata, o anche immediata relazione con varj passi della Vita, e del Pontificato di Leon X. e con alcuni oggetti da me pure accennati, o discussi nelle mie note; e su questi appunto ho giudicato di dover proporre alcune mie osservazioni.

IV. Degno di scusa mi sembra prima di tutto il Signor Roscoe, se parlando delle poesie di Lorenzo de' Medici, delle quali fece più volte menzione anche nella Vita di Leon X. innoltrossi a dire, che *alcune possono andar del pari colle più celebrate de' tempi presenti.* La prova, che il Sig. Roscoe ha a favor suo, è che alcune di quelle poesie si leggono tuttora, e si ammirano, mentre scordate sono intieramente le produzioni di molti poeti del secolo XV. Se le poesie di Lorenzo si sostennero malgrado lo stato della lingua di quel tempo, messo in campo dal medesimo Pozzetti, che poteasi chiamare uno stato d'*adolescenza;* non si sostennero se non per le loro bellezze originali, per la profonda filosofia, che vi è sparsa per entro, e per la grandiosità de' concetti, anzichè per la bellezza della elocuzione. Nè si può ammettere tuttavia ciò che il Pozzetti ha asserito in questo luogo, che lo stato della lingua e della poesia Italiana in quel periodo era lontano dall' eccellenza, perchè lo studio della Greca letteratura predominava a spese della

nazionale. Io non sono d' avviso, che le Greche lettere, che allora solo cominciavano ad insegnarsi pubblicamente, portassero alcun inciampo ai progressi della lingua Italiana, che anzi io credo ne acquistasse questa grandiosità, lustro e decoro, e fors' anche una copia di vocaboli, e di modi di bel dire. Ma la lingua allora non era per anche compiuta, ingentilita, perfezionata, come lo fu ne' tempi successivi; e più presto sarebbe giunta ad uno stato di eccellenza, se tutti imitato avessero Lorenzo, e non si fossero dati invece al coltivamento della Latina, anzichè della Italiana poesia.

V. Nè forse è tanto degno di riprensione Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, come è stato detto dal Varchi, e ripetuto dal Pozzetti; perchè, ove ben si rifletta, scrivendo il Pico a Lorenzo, ha bensì voluto complimentarlo sulle sue poesie, (cosa alla quale dovea porsi mente in questa quistione); ma non ha detto perciò che anteporre si dovesse al Dante, ed al Petrarca; bensì il lodò, perchè avesse fatto uso della lingua di Petrarca, e della pienezza, e della grandiosità dei sentimenti di Dante. Se egli diede qualche maggiore estensione al suo pensiero, questo dee attribuirsi all' amicizia, ed alle frasi alquanto diffuse di una lettera complimentosa.

VI. Il Muratori citato dal Pozzetti, esaminando partitamente alcuni sonetti di Lorenzo, dice, che uno è *da pregiarsi assaissimo;* che la chiusa di un altro è *piena di mirabile novità;* che que' componimenti sono *lodevoli, ed eleganti,* che vi sono *lampi d' ingegno peregrini, e vivaci,* che *meritano applauso singolare,* e finalmente che è *oro di miniera, mischiato con rozza terra, ma è sempre oro.* E il Tiraboschi, giudice non ricusabile dal Pozzetti, dice, che a Lorenzo si dee a *ragione la lode di essere stato uno*

dei più felici poeti di questo secolo, (del xv.) e che le sue poesie volgari *offrono esempj di diversi generi, nei quali vedesi una felice imitazione degli antichi, una leggiadra e fervida fantasia, e uno stile assai più colto di quello, che leggesi negli altri poeti di quella età.* Dopo tutto questo, non può farsi a mio credere un delitto al Signor Roscoe di quanto ha detto in lode delle poesie di Lorenzo il Magnifico, tanto più che egli avea per guida il Fabroni, che ha anteposto Lorenzo per la venustà della elocuzione, per la copia delle immagini, per l'acume delle sentenze, a tutti i vati del secolo XV. eccetto il Poliziano. Osserverò di passagio, che il Pozzetti si oppone a questo giudizio, mettendo in campo Giusto de' Conti, e Serafino Aquilano. Avess' egli almeno nominato solo il primo, sul quale può cader dubbio, ma non mai il secondo!

VII. Non mi fermerò punto sulla difesa, che il Pozzetti si studia di fare, dell' elogio di Lorenzo de' Medici scritto da Bruno Bruni, allegando il suo attaccamento alla cattolica religione, che lo dissuase, o lo trattenne dall' estendersi nel ragguaglio della cospirazione de' Pazzi, di cui si tenne complice il nipote di Sisto IV. Di questa circostanza di fatto ridondano tutte le storie di que' tempi; e non so, come lo spirito di religione potesse in questo caso far torto alla storica verità. Io non ho inserito questo brevissimo cenno, se non perchè il nipote di Sisto IV. si fa complice di quella congiura anche nel Volume I. della Vita di Leon X.

VIII. Parlando del tempo preciso, in cui ebbe in Venezia principio la stampa, si rimprovera il Sig. Roscoe, perchè sia *rimasto in forse* nello stabilirlo, mentre due anni avanti, che si pubblicasse il primo volume della Vita di Lorenzo, il Morelli avea pubblicato cinque documenti,

che determinano l' epoca ricercata verso il 1469. Questo discorso cammina ottimamente; ed il Sig. Roscoe non avea forse veduto que' documenti, massime che, per quanto mi sembra, la corrispondenza tra esso, ed il dotto Bibliotecario di S. Marco, non nacque se non in occasione della Vita di Leon X. Ma il Pozzetti alla pag. 41 ha guastato tutto questo ragionamento, perchè invece di supporre il difetto di una decima nella data del *Decor puellarum*, è andato dietro ai sogni del Signor Mauro Boni, supponendo due epoche della Veneta Tipografia; l' una, nella quale fosse privatamente praticata dal Jenson nel 1461, l' altra nella quale fosse pubblicamente esercitata sotto la protezione del governo nel 1469. Non v' ha più ora alcuno, che non dubiti dell' errore della data, che il Pozzetti a torto dice essere *maniera troppo facile ad iscioglière qualunque nodo sì fatto*. Molti esempj si hanno di questi errori; uno se n' ha nel Polifilo stesso di Aldo; altro nei *miracoli della B. V.* stampati in Milano apparentemente nel 1469, e di fatto nel 1479; io posseggo perfino un Lattanzio del 1490, che per errore porta la data MCCCXC. e questa maniera di sciogliere le difficoltà, quand' è *sicura*, non dee rigettarsi perchè *facile*. Il Pozzetti rimettendo in campo la ridicola supposizione del Boni, non farebbe che giustificare pienamente il dubbio, nel quale il Sig. Roscoe ha lasciato l' epoca precisa della introduzione della stampa in Venezia.

IX. Più lungamente dovrei io fermarmi sulla accusa data dal Pozzetti al Sig. Roscoe di aver egli *in modo aspro, e disdicevole denigrata la memoria di Pietro Barbo* Veneziano, prima Cardinale di S. Marco, poi Papa sotto il nome di Paolo II.; giacchè non solo nella Vita di Lorenzo il Magnifico, ma in più luoghi altresì di quella di Leon X, lo scrittore Inglese si esprime presso a poco

nel modo medesimo. Io farò osservare prima di tutto, che poco attendibile è il testimonio di Michele Cannensi Vescovo di Castro, il quale vissuto era sotto Eugenio IV. e regnante ancora Paolo II. di lui nipote scrivea la vita di questo Pontefice. Egli è troppo naturale, che un prelato, creato Vescovo dallo zio, e che corteggiava il nipote, lodasse la modestia del giovane Barbo, fatto cardinale, che tutti in Firenze ricevea con gentilezza coloro che andavano à recargli uffizj di congratulazione, cosa per se stessa niente maravigliosa. Dice il Cannensi medesimo, che alla sua elevazione al papato fu salutato padre della patria, fondatore della quiete, amico della giustizia. Ma qual Papa non lo fu mai in quella occasione? Certo è che Paolo II. guardò sempre d' occhio bieco i Malatesta, i Medici, i Feltrii, e tutte le case principesche d' Italia, segno ben manifesto della più smoderata ambizione. Se veri altronde fossero i racconti, che di lui si fanno da diversi storici, e che forse non sono tutti privi di fondamento, non si potrebbe mettere in dubbio che dominato non fosse da un sentimento di ambizione, e di vanità eccessiva, e fors' anche ridicola. Uno dice, che egli era bellissimo della persona, e che ascendendo al trono pontificio prender volle il nome di Formoso, dal che si astenne per timor solo di essere deriso. Un altro, l' Abate di Choisy, dice, che spesso compariva in pubblico con un triregno tutto ornato di diamanti. Altri parlano delle di lui medaglie coniate con titoli pomposi, che egli facea gettare nelle fondamenta degli edifizj, che si cominciavano ad ergere al suo tempo. Si sa, che egli per meritare gli applausi del popolo Romano introdusse giuochi pubblici, che la memoria richiamavano de' Cesari antichi, e che in tutto affetava una pompa mondana, ed una esterna magnificenza.

X. Loda il Pozzetti in termini generali la bontà del di lui animo; ma in questo articolo prescinde da tutti gli affari coi Malatesta, e coi Medici, e dal furore non cristiano, col quale non solo anatematizzò il Re di Boemia, ma fece anche predicare contra di esso una crociata, che fortunatamente non ebbe alcun effetto. Non ebbe dunque gran torto il Sig. Roscoe, se in qualche luogo si avvisò di intitolarlo *tristo*, e *cattivo*.

XI. Il Sig. Roscoe lo disse ancora *ignorante*, ed il Pozzetti lo vuol far credere letterato, e protettore delle lettere. Può essere forse, che il Sig. Roscoe si inganni nell' appoggiare l' ignoranza di quel Papa all' essersi egli troppo tardi dato allo studio delle lettere; ma nè il Cannensi, nè il Cardinal Querini, non possono ammettersi come mallevadori del suo sapere, nè essi adducono fatti, che provino in quel Papa una ragionevole istruzione. Che egli avèsse alcuna cognizione delle antiche medaglie, può esser benissimo, perchè egli forse per vanità ne raccoglieva; ma questo non prova, che egli amasse, o coltivasse la buona letteratura.

XII. Si duole il Pozzetti, perchè quel Papa sia detto dal Roscoè persecutore crudele delle lettere, e delle scienze; e per indebolire quest' asserzione, dice, che egli pagava i professori; che fece Vescovi ed anche Cardinali alcuni dotti, che erano stati tra i di lui maestri, che aggradì alcune dediche, e che al di lui tempo fu introdotta in Roma l' arte tipografica. Ma ritenuto, che i primi fatti allegati non provano nulla per l'assunto, giacchè le scuole doveano essere alimentate; Vescovi e Cardinali non poteano nominarsi soltanto gli sciocchi; e le dediche, massime de' letterati più famosi, oltrechè lusingavano la vanità, non si sarebbono potute ricusare

senza una specie di scandalo; è da notarsi in proposito degli incoraggiamenti dati alla stampa, che se il celebre Giovanni Andrea vescovo d' Aleria ne lodò da prima la liberalità, ebbe in seguito a lagnarsi di essere stato pasciuto di vane speranze, la forza della quale espressione invano si sforzano di attenuare il Tiraboschi, ed il Pozzetti, dicendo che ciò scrivea quel Vescovo a Sisto IV. per ottenere a se, ed a suoi stampatori più copiosi soccorsi.

XIII. È ben certo altronde, che egli perseguitò il Platina, Pomponio Leto, Callimaco, e tutti i socj dell' Accademia Romana; che tutti i letterati di Roma dovettero fuggire, o nascondersi, del che si è parlato più volte dal Sig. Roscoe in quest' opera, specialmente nel §. I. del cap. ii. t. i. p. 82, e seg.; e nella nota addizionale viii. al t. iv. p. 158 e seg.; che le lettere, le scienze, i buoni studj andarono in Roma in un decadimento totale sotto il suo pontificato. Basti per tutti il testimonio di Giambattista Cantalicio, che si è già riferito nel tomo i. p. 84. Quest' uomo, prelato della Chiesa Romana, e Vescovo in seguito di Atri, e di Penna, che morì nel 1513, e per conseguenza fiorì nel tempo di quel Pontefice, e fu addetto a quella corte; così si esprime nel suo Epigramma sopra Callimaco, fuggito per la persecuzione di Paolo II, (Barbo per nome di famiglia) fino in Polonia.

" Callimachus, Barbos fugiens ex urbe furores,
Barbara quæ fuerant regna, latina facit."

XIV. Forse il Sig. Roscoe si sarà troppo liberamente espresso sul punto dei dubbj e dei sospetti nati in Roma intorno le novecento proposizioni su tutte le scienze esposte, e sostenute da Giovanni Pico; ma è pur troppo vero, che i curiali Romani non si fecero molto onore con

que' sospetti, che in breve furono poi dissipati, e conosciuti ingiusti, il che forse avvenuto non sarebbe, se Pico appartenuto non avesse ad una delle famiglie sovrane in Italia. Infatti anche il Pozzetti osserva, che censurando le proposizioni, que' gravi teologi convenuti si erano di rispettare la persona del Pico, e che i maggiori di lui avversarj non erano, com' egli dice, i teologi, (sebbene dai teologi partissero le censure) ma alcuni saccentelli, che riguardavano come pericolosa l' ostentazione di un sapere enciclopedico; e questi pure non poteano essere che ignoranti ecclesiastici. S' inganna poi il Pozzetti, attribuendo al solo Sig. Peignot l' aneddoto del teologo, che pigliò in iscambio la *cabala* per un 'eresiarca, giacchè questo vien riferito da scrittori molto più antichi, e trovasi in tutti i Dizionarj storici del secolo passato.

XV. Riguardo all' avvertenza fatta dal Pozzetti, che il Sig. Roscoe avea supposto il celebre Gnomone della Metropolitana di Firenze innalzato da Paolo Toscanelli circa il 1460, mentre per le notizie di Leonardo Ximenes risulta che tal fatto accade sett' anni dipoi; farò osservare, che nella vita di Leon X. l' Inglese scrittore limitossi a dire, che quel grande gnomone era stato dal Toscanelli eretto verso l' anno 1468, come può vedersi nel vol. ix. di questa traduzione alla pag. 123.

XVI. Dove maggiormente s' inganna il Pozzetti, tratto forse in errore da Apostolo Zeno nelle note al Fontanini, egli è nell' assegnare alla pubblicazione della *Geografia di Tolomeo* in versi del Berlinghieri l' epoca tra il 1490, ed il 1500; mentre più giustamente il Sig. Roscoe, al quale tenne dietro il Brunet nel suo *Manuale del librajo*, avea riferita la pubblicazione di quel libro al 1480. La forma de' caratteri usati in quel tempo da Niccolò di

Lamagna, e molte altre osservazioni bibliografiche, avrebbero portato chicchessia a decidere la quistione anche prima d' ora in favore del Sig. Roscoe, e contra l' opinione, benchè rispettabile, di Apostolo Zeno. Ma la cosa è ora messa fuori di dubbio, dacchè io ho pubblicato per intiero per la prima volta la lettera singolare del Berlinghieri medesimo a Zizim fratello di Bajazet, detto in Italia comunemente *Gemma Sultano*, tratta da un magnifico esemplare della R. Biblioteca di Torino. Quella lettera autografa porta la data del giorno 31 maggio 1484, come può vedersi nella mia nota (*a*) alla pag. 75 del tom. i. e quella lettera trovasi scritta su di un esemplare della Geografia stampato, e magnificamente miniato, da me nella detta nota pienamente descritto, che il Berlinghieri offeriva al principe Turco, dopo che già era stato quel libro intitolato, come porta la stampa medesima, a Federigo duca d' Urbino. Se dunque nel maggio del 1484 il libro era già stato indirizzato ad altri, se era stato miniato espressamente per Gemma o Zizim, come si fa vedere in quella nota; se quella era la data solo di una lettera assai posteriore alla stampa, riesce provato all' evidenza, che questa dovea essersi eseguita verso il 1480, come disse il Sig. Roscoe, e che in alcun modo non potea riferirsi al periodo assegnato da Apostolo Zeno, e dal Pozzetti.

XVII. Osserveremo per ultimo, che il Pozzetti, troppo fidandosi della vita di Savonarola scritta dal suo ammiratore Gianfrancesco Picò, forse a torto taccia il Sig. Roscoe, perchè abbia detto essersi quel frate per *fini obbliqui intruso nella camera* dell' infermo Lorenzo de' Medici. Se è vero, che il Savonarola nell' atto di confessare l' infermo, volle da esso esigere, *che restituisse Firenze in libertà, e nel suo stato popolare ad uso di Re-*

pubblica; (alle quali parole l' infermo saggiamente non rispose); io trovo, che lo scrittore Inglese potea dire più ancora intorno le politiche speculazioni del frate.

XVIII. Non è più felice il Pozzetti laddove rimprovera il sig. Roscoe per aver detto che *Savonarola, essendosi fatto capo di una fazione assai potente, cominciò ad aspirare alla primazia dello Stato.* La smania del frate per influenzare, se non per dirigere la pubblica amministrazione, prova abbastanza, che egli aspirava se non ad un assoluto potere, almeno a primeggiare tra i cittadini, il che è quello per l' appunto, che il Sig. Roscoe ha indicato. Se altronde il Sig. Roscoe asserì, che l' *infelice religioso espiò colla morte la sua follia, e i suoi delitti;* neppure in questo è riprensibile, perchè dagli scrittori anche più appassionati per Savonarola può raccogliersi, che egli era un fanatico esaltato, che è quanto dire un pazzo; e che potevano ascriversi a delitto la sua smania di entrare in tutti gli affari dello stato, i discorsi sediziosi, coi quali agitava il popolo di Firenze, la simulazione di ispirazioni, e lumi soprannaturali, ed altre stravaganze da esso svelate nelle sue confessioni. Malgrado tutto questo il Sig. Roscoe ha parlato con molto maggiore moderazione su questo argomento nel § x. del cap. vi. p. 95 e seg. del tom. ii. della Vita di Leone X.

XIX. Quanto a Pietro Leoni di Narni secondo alcuni, e secondo altri di Spoleti, che curò al dire di alcuni, al dire d' altri trascurò Lorenzo nell' ultima malattia; che giusta l' avviso di alcuni della famiglia avvelenò quel grand' uomo, ed a giudizio d' altri era incapace di tale attentato; egli è certo che fu trovato poco dopo morto in un pozzo. Alcuni pretesero, ch' egli vi si fosse gettato da se medesimo, come maniaco; alcuni che get-

tato vi fosse da altri: fuvvi chi disse, ch' egli era stato dapprima scannato, e quindi sommerso; fuvvi perfino chi asserì, (e questo era un Greco soggiornante in Milano), che Leone era stato gettato nel pozzo per ordine del primogenito di Lorenzo. Il Sig. Roscoe in tanta varietà e dubbiezza di racconti, tutti egualmente privi di solidi fondamenti, scelse forse il miglior partito, che era. quello di dire, che Leone poco dopo l' avviso ricevuto della morte di Lorenzo, si precipitò in un pozzo. Io non trovo, che riprenderlo si debba per questo, come ha fatto il Pozzetti. La cosa era dubbia, e lo scrittore Inglese prudentissimo si credette in questo caso autorizzato ad allontanare un orribile sospetto, non appoggiato ad alcuna prova, e neppure ad alcuna verisimiglianza, che veniva a ricadere sull' erede di Lorenzo, sul capo di una illustre famiglia, sul fratello di Leon X. Se il Tiraboschi lodò il Valeriano per aver egli evitato di *far motto di tal delitto*, solo per riguardo a Clemente VII. molto più dee lodarsi il sig. Roscoe per non avere per un riguardo alla umanità, ed alla pubblica decenza, accennato quel nero sospetto, che mai nominare potrebbesi un delitto, non essendo da alcuna prova nè tampoco da alcun indizio convalidato. Al quale proposito osserverò, che con una critica più avveduta il Pozzetti menato non avrebbe sì gran romore, e sì gran trionfo per la lettera di Calcondila, pubblicata dal Bandini nella sua raccolta di antichi documenti. Quel dotto Greco scriveva soli 36 giorni dopo la morte di Lorenzo, ma scriveva da Milano; scriveva sul solo appoggio di quelle voci, sovente menzognere, che si spargevano, e che si spargono tuttora nel volgo, tra le quali quella pure annoveravasi dello spontaneo annegamento di Leone; scriveva ciò che egli pensava su quell' avvenimento, cioè esponeva la propria opinione sulla cagione del medesimo, e ben si sa che l' umana

natura inclina sempre piuttosto a credere una supposta reità, anzichè a scusarla; ed in que' tempi massime, fecondi di grandi delitti, non moriva giammai personaggio distinto, che trovar non si volesse, anche in mancanza di qualunque indizio, e a dispetto delle apparenze contrarie, avvelenato. Una privata lettera di questo tenore, scritta lungi dalla Toscana, ed appoggiata solo alle dicerie del volgo, non può in alcun conto rendere *trionfante* il sentimento del Pozzetti, che opina per l' avvelenamento, nè dar torto al Signor Roscoe, che nel dubbio si è attenuto ad una opinione più consentanea alla natura della cosa, più savia, più prudente, più giudiziosa.

XX. Io non ho riferito queste ultime osservazioni, estranee totalmente alla storia di Leone X, se non per far vedere da quale spirito era mosso il censore, e per dimostrare, ch' egli si è studiato più volte di trovar macchia ove non ve n' avea vestigio, di supporre o di creare errori ove le espressioni erano per avventura le più giuste, o le più esatte, di fare un libro insomma, di impinguare due dissertazioni, di sfoggiare molta erudizione, di sostenere qualche parziale opinione, anzichè di emendare alcun difetto reale, o di ricercare con nuovi lumi la storica verità. Di alcuni oggetti egli si mostra ben informato; e non può negarsi, ch' egli avrebbe potuto far meglio, se a tutt' altro scopo avesse rivolto i suoi studj, chè non a quello di censurare un' opera nuova in allora, e famosa anche in Italia. Duolmi, che quel commendevole scrittore di Elogi, col quale io era in relazione, sia stato già da alcuni anni involato alle lettere, giacchè altrimenti a lui medesimo avrei comunicato le mie osservazioni; ma fatte avendole dopo la traduzione e l' illustrazione laboriosa della Vita di Leon X., io le ho credute tanto collegate coll' argo-

mento di questa vita medesima, e tanto interessanti per l' illustre autore, per il decoro delle sue opere, e per l' istruzione insieme di tutti i leggitori, che mi sono indotto a non trascurare in questa; siccome in occasione più opportuna, la pubblicazione di queste poche linee, dettate dalla più rigorosa imparzialità.

No. VII.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 15, 1796.

Two days ago, Sir, good Mr. Edwards brought me your eagerly expected, and most welcome, second volume. I must thank you for it immediately, though incapable of writing with my own hand: I have been extremely ill with the gout for above eleven weeks, and ten days ago was at the point of death with an inflammation in my bowels, but have happily lived to see the continuation of your work, of which I have already gone through two chapters, and find them fully equal to their predecessors. Indeed, as I cannot express with words of my own my sentiments both of your work and of you, I shall beg your leave to transcribe the character of another person, which so exactly suits my thoughts of you, that I should very aukwardly attempt to draw another portrait which I am sure would not be so like.

"Although these volumes appear to be rather the amusement of the leisure hours of a polite scholar, than the researches of a professed historian, yet they display an acquaintance with the transactions of Italy, seldom acquired except by a native. To a great proficiency in the literature of that country, Mr. Tenhove united an indisputable taste in the productions of all the fine arts,

and a general knowledge of the state of manners, and the progress of science, in every period of society. The fertility of his genius, and the extent of his information, have enabled him to intersperse his narrative with a variety of interesting digressions and brilliant observations, and the most engaging work that has perhaps ever appeared on a subject of literary history, is written by a native of one country, in the language of another, on the affairs of a third."

Nothing, Sir, but your own extreme modesty, and impartial justice, would have blinded you so far as to have prevented your discovering that this must be a more faithful picture of yourself than it can be of Mr. Tenhove's imperfect performance, omitting *the language of a third.* In my own copy of your work I shall certainly insert the quotation in lieu of *Testimonia Autorum.*

Give me leave to thank you (for your own sake too) for your improvement of the two lines, beginning with *imagined evils:* you have completely satisfied me, Sir; and since I find that you can correct as masterly as compose, I believe, that with all my admiration and respect, I shall be impertinent enough to point out any new faults, if I can discover them, in your second volume.

I hope by this sincere sketch of my sentiments, I have so entirely convinced you of them that I can have no occasion to profess again how much I am, Sir,

Your most obliged, most delighted,

And most obedient humble Servant,

ORFORD.

No. VIII.

IL REV. CANONICO

ANGELO MARIA BANDINI,

AL

SIG. GUGLIELMO ROSCOE.

Firenze, 6 *Settembre*, 1803.

Eccede troppo la bontà sua verso di me, che altro merito non ò verso la sua degna persona, che quello di aver resa la dovuta giustizia all' opera sua immortale della vita del Mag^co^. Lorenzo de' Medici, uno de quei rari geni, che nella rivoluzione dei secoli la natura produce, a confusione dei viventi.

Meritava il suò glorioso figlio Leon X. ch' ella impiegasse l'aurea sua penna per illustrarlo. Io farò ogni sforzo per unirgli dei materiali, e molti gliene somministranno i libri che io gli spedisco. Dei libri pubblicati da me nelli anni scorsi, non mi è restato neppure un foglio, onde ò dovuto ricorrere agli amici, i quali con stento se ne sono privati. Non mi resta che una quantità sorprendente di esemplari del mio Catalogo dei Codici Medicei, mancanti del primo tomo dei manoscritti Greci, dei quali sono affatto privo; perchè appena venne in luce che fu dai Librari disseminato per le città culte di Europa, e specialmente in Inghilterra, dove i prefetti

delle Biblioteche più non anno pensato, dopo la fatale revoluzione di Francia di farne l'acquisto.** Sappia che l'Imperatore Francesco I. mio protettore, che mi animò a intraprendere quest' opera malagevole, somministrandomi una somma di denaro per supplire alle spese, con laute speranze, quando mentre stavo per ultimare il tomo ii. dei Codici Greci, per somma mia disgrazia, improvisamente mi morì. Asceso al Trono della Toscana Pietro Leopoldo suo figlio, Giovanetto di 19 anni, e inesperto nell' arte difficillissima di regnare, niuna incitamento mi desse per il proseguimento dell' opera. Ciò non ostante, per l'amor delle lettere volli continuarla, privandomi dei comodi della vita.

Troverà tutti i Libri richiestomi colla sua lettera dei 21 Luglio, 1802: all' eccettuazione del Trifiodoro, che non ò neppure per me, delle Lettere del Castiglione, e del Sadoleto, delle quale ò fatto uno spoglio; ma procurerò di acquistarle per lei. Bisogna che io la renda intesa di una opera di singolar rarità e inreperibile, che porta il seguente titolo. *Stephani Joanninensis. I. V. consulti Senensis in Mediceorum Monarchiam Pentatheucus, ad Divum Clementem Mediceum* VII. *Pont. Max. Apostolici Regni Clavigerum, quo Medicei Heroes omnes, qui jampridem invidiosa temporum caligine consenuerant, ad suum immortalitatis splendorem evecti, renitescunt; omniaque illorum præclara facinora quæ madido veluti sudore delituerant, in augustissimum veritatis monumentum reserantur; Divique Leonis* X. *Pont. Max. gesta panduntur.*—In fine sic legitur. *Ex Archetypo Anconitanæ Calcographiæ: Tipo Bernardino Gueraldi. Vercellensis Chalcographi publice cudentis: eodem Stephano Joanninensi impensam erogante: post redimitam fidei orthodoxe salutem* M.CCCCC.XXIIII. *Sixto Kal. Decembris.*

fol. pag. CCXXIV. Si parla minutamente di tutti i fatti concernenti la vita del Card. Gio. Medici, poi Leon X. Inde si passa alla sua elezione al Pontificato; e si descrivono le sua magnifiche imprese fino alla morte, che occupano carte 30. Quest' opera è stata affatto ignota al Fabroni, che stampò la Vita di Leon X. Pisis, 1497. 4°.

Si parla di Lorenzo de' Medici e del figlio suo in altro libro di Poesie Latine che à per titolo Pierii Fontani Firmani Tages, ad Franciscum Medicem Magnum Hetruriæ Ducem. Bononiæ. ap. Jo. Rossium, 1577. 4°. v. p. 35. Lo accludo due altre memorie di Leon X. e sempre ne adunerò delle nuove.

Umo dev^mo. Serv.

A. M. BANDINI.

IL REV. CANONICO

ANGELO MARIA BANDINI,

BIBLIOTECARIO DELLA LIB. MEDICEA-LAURENZIANA,

AL SIG. GUGLIELMO ROSCOE.

DOPPO sei mesi di viaggio, mi è pervenuta la sua pregiatissima lettera data nel dì 20 Giugno decorso; ed unitamente la bellissima vita di Lorenzo dei Medici detto il Magnifico. Ben meritava questo grand' uomo, a cui debbono le arti e le lettere il loro principale ingrandimento, e splendore, di essere illustrato dall' aurea sua penna.

E poiche ancor io, fino dalla mia tenera età mi trovai

trasportato da un nobile entusiasmo a celebrare le sue lodi immortali, quindi è che fino da quando seppi che era uscita alla luce l'opera sua, qual potei vedere in mano di un dotto Inglese che passò di quì, mi si accese un ardentissimo desiderio di possederla. E non potendo avere l'originale, fui contento di acquistare la traduzione in lingua Toscana stampata in Pisa. Può dunque immaginarsi VS: Ill^ma: qual sia stata la consolazione che ò provata nel vedermela comparire abbigliata nella più sforzosa gala, ed impressa in candida cartapecora da fare invidia alle più nitide stampe membranacee del vecchio Aldo. Forma questa la più preziosa gioia letteraria della mia privata Biblioteca, che tengo nel mio Romitorio Fiesolano, dove l'ò collocata in mezzo alle stampe Bodoniane. Non vi voleva che il generoso cuore di un dotto Inglese, quale Ella è, per farmi degno di un tanto dono, che tra i tanti incalcolabili danni, che mi sono piombati addosso, doppo l'invasione fatta per ben due volte dalle truppe Francesi della misera innocente Tòscana, mi à assai sollevato dal profondo cordoglio che mi opprimeva, anco per la mancanza delle mie entrate, seguita in tale luttuosa occasione.

Quindi passai sette mesi solo e romingo per l'aperta campagna, non facendomi sicuro nell'asilo della mia Biblioteca, nè pubblica nè privata. Pubblicai a mie spese il Catalogo ragionato della Biblioteca Laurentiana, benchè mi mancasse il mio Protettore Francesco I. Imperatore, che mi animò ad interprenderlo con lusinghiere speranze, che dopo la di lui improvisa morte svanirono, perchè chi succedè, non era niente portato per questi studi. Or mi trovo una gran quantità di corpi mancanti dei primi tomi, che andarono nelle principali Biblioteche d'Europa, e principalmente in codesto fioritissimo Regno.

O inteso con gran piacere che s'occupi presentemente a scrivere la vita di Leon X. argomento degno del suo grand'ingegno. Oltre a quello che troverà nel mio catalogo riguardante l'argomento che tratta, è necessario che vegga le miè *Lettere Fiesolane* XII. *ora di nuovo pubblicate. In Siena per Luigi Bindi.* 1800. 8*vo. pag.* 71. dove parlo dell' Abbazia di S. Bartolommeo, edificata da Cosimo Padre della Patria a piè del Monte di Fiesole, dove il dì 10 Marzo, 1492, il Cardinale Giovanni dei Medici prese le insegne Cardinalizie, e Matteo Bosso, celebre Abbate di quella Abbazia, descrive minutamente la festa in una lettera al Padre Don Arcangelo Vicentini, che è tra le opere del Bosso stampate a Bologna da Vittor Benazzi nel 1627. fol. a pag. 283. Nell' istesse Lettere, pag. 127. e 142. si parla della gita, che detto Pontifice fece a Fiesole a dì 11 Gennaio MDXVI. e visitò la chiesa, e il Monastero dei Girolamini, ai quali Cosimo Padre della patria aveva edificato un nobile Monastero, a intuito del Beato Carlo da Monte Gravelli loro fondatore, e suo grande amico. * * *

Umo devmo. Serre

ANG. MAR. BANDINI.

MONSIG. ANGELO FABRONI,

PROVVEDITORE DEL' UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA,

AL SIG. GUL. ROSCOE.

Pisa, 31 *Marzo,* 1800.

LA celebrità che vi siete acquistata colla Vita di Lorenzo il Magnifico far che io non mi penta di avervi dato un impulso di scriverla, con quella ch' io publicai del

medesimo. Voi avete supplito alle mie mancanze, e se avessi saputo in tempo il disegno vostro, avrei potuto trarre da quei medesimi archivj, da cui presi molti preziosi monumenti relativi al mio soggetto, altre memorie che avrebbero potuto rendere anche più copiosa l' opera vostra. Questa però è tale, da non lasciare nulla da desiderare. Permettetemi che me ne congratuli con voi, con me, e coll' Italia nostra; e questa vi sara anche più obbligata, se, come sento, darete anche al pubblico la vita di Leon X. sulla quale anch' io ho lavorato, pubblicando due anni fa il Libro intitolato *Leonis X. Pontificis Maximi Vita.* Se non fosse avenuto alle mani vostre, io mi fo un dovere di offerirvela, come mi fo quello di offerirvi quel poco ch'io ho tentato di fare per illustrare le memorie de' nostri Italiani. Esistono 20 volume di Vite, cominciando dal Galileo fino ai giorni nostri. Publicai ancora la Vita Latina del Petrarca col fine di premetterla all' edizione copiosa, ordinata ed illustrata delle lettere di lei, progetto inesequibile nelle attuale dolorose circostanze; e attualmente si stampano in Parma quattro miei Elogj Italiani, di Dante, Poliziano, Ariosto, e Tasso. Ma queste cose mie non possono, come le vostre, repromettersi l' immortalità. Duolmi all' estremo che rare e difficili sieno l' occasione del comercio librajo tra l' Inghilterra e l' Italia, che volontieri vi proporrei il baratto di libri miei e vostri. Se credete che possa esser sicura la via del mare, disponete pur di me e del opera mia, che ve lo offerisco interamente. Abbiatemi fin d' ora tra i vostri amici, come lo sono da un pezzo tra i vostri ammiratori, e credetemi.

Il vostro devotissimo servitore,

MON. ANGELO FABRONI,
(*Provveditore del Universitá di Pisa*).

MONSIG. ANGELO FABRONI,

AL

SIG. GUL. ROSCOE.

La sua lettera, O Signore, scritta il 20 di Maggio del anno scorso m' è pervenuta solamente pochi giorni fa. La sorte infelicissima dell' Italia n' è stata verisimilmente la cagione. Io però son ben lieto di averla ricevuta come un pegno della sua bontà ed amicizia, a cui vorrei sapere corrispondere come la merita. Le offerisco per tanto tutto quel poco che vaglio, di cui potra prevalersi senza riserva.

Per mezzo di Sig. * * *, che dalla Toscana torna in Inghilterra, le invio la vita di Leon X. Dio sa come reggerà al suo giudizio purgatissimo. Son ben certo che se ella lavora sopra quest' epoca tanto gloriosa alle lettere, troverà cose da me omesse, e che le lumeggierà con quei colori ch' io non ho saputo adoperare. Prova la mia asserzione quel che ha saputo fare, con tanta sua gloria, sopra Lorenzo il Magnifico; *opera gia data all' Italia mediante le premure mie*, e le fatiche d'un Giovane Cavaliere Pisano, che l' ha tradotta con bastante eleganza. Se avrem pace e pace generale, potrem sperare che le lettere, e il letterario commercio si prendan corso; nello stato attuale tutto è incagliato. Pieno di vera stima ho l' onore di dirmi.

Ill. Sig. Rev°. & obb°. Servitore,

Angelo Fabroni.

Pisa, 24 *Ap.* 1801.

No. IX.

SIG. JACOPO MORELLI,

REGIO CONSIGLIERE E BIBLIOTECARIO DA SAN MARCO,

AL SIG. GUL. ROSCOE.

BEN volentieri vorrei poter soddisfare all richiesta fatta mi per conto suo dal compitissimo Sig. Johnson col mandarle qualche monumento inedito o raro intorno a Papa Leone X. di cui ella sta facendo la vita, dopo di avere pubblicata quella di Lorenzo de' Medici con tanto applauso. Ma attualmente io mi trovo tanto occupato con si poca salute, e male trattata dalla cruda stagione, che conviene che mi ridura a mandarle un Elenco quì occluso di Monumenti e Libri spettanti a Papa Leone. Alcuni dì questi certamente ella avrà in queste biblioteche d' Inghilterra; altri avrà avuti d' Italia, dove so che il Sig. Bandini ed altri hanno fatti ricerche per lei; ma se qualcheduno ancora gliene mancasse, e che ella volesse averlo, con un poco di tempo io procurerò di renderla servita. In seguitò poi io con qualche maggior comodo userò ulteriori ricerche, e so bene che troverò altre cose poco o nulla conosciute; e gliene scriverò acciò deliberi cosa le piacerà di avere, essendo fatto in fretta l' Elenco che ora le mando. Frattanto ho dato al Sig. Johnson un libro dell' amico mio Abate Francesconi che vedrà registrato nell' Elenco, di cui ne aveva una copia duplicata; e se gia lo avesse aviso da altri, potrà dare a qualche suo amico.

No. X.

GULIELMO ROSCOE,

DOMINICUS MORENIUS,

S. P. D.

Ex quo Laurentii Medicis cognomento *Magnifici* Artium, et Platonicæ Philosophiæ restauratoris eximii Vitam typis Liverpoolianis impressam promulgasti, Italorum omnium, et præcipue Florentinorum admirationem, benevolentiam, et maximam tui existimationem tibi conciliasti; et ut præclarum hoc ingenii tui opus citius, faciliusque universa Italia tractaret, haberetque in deliciis, ex Anglico in Etruscum sermonem Caietanus Mecherinius Patricius Pisanus illud vertit, vulgavitque an. MDCCIC. Alia quidem extat Laurentii Vita, quam non multis abhinc annis Angelus Fabronius Academiæ Pisanæ Præses conscripsit, eaque prorsus laudanda, tum rerum delectu, tum elegantia latini sermonis; at tua latius sese extendit, et præter propria Laurentii gesta, quidquid ad rem tum literariam, tum politicam, tum bellicam illius ævi pertinet, miro nexu comprehendit, ita ut non Italiæ solum, sed totius ferme Europæ historia potius appellari queat. Quapropter literaria Florentinorum historia maximam inde lucem acquisivit. Revera

plures magni momenti quæstiones optimè elucidas, et resolvis, scriptores inter se discrepantes concilias, eximios viros, eosque perplures ea ætate, tum scientia, tum eruditione pollentes, et Laurentio, Mediceæque familiæ acceptissimos enumeras, eorumque scripta percenses, et illustras, monumenta insuper perantiqua, et pretiosissima adeo accurate detegis, et interpretaris, ut etsi in regionibus longe a nobis dissitis degas, in media tamen urbe nostra scripsisse videaris. Hanc vero adeo celebras, adeo laudibus exornas, ut sapientiæ sedem, doctrinæ emporium, ac universæ prope Italiæ Athenæum tunc temporis fuisse affirmare non dubites.

Ast tuis hisce præclaris meritis novum nunc accedit, propter Vitam Leonis X. Pontificis Maximi, Laurentii Medicis filii, pari diligentia, et doctrina a te descriptam, quæ diu exoptata tandem ad nos nuper pervenit. In hac omnia prorsus summa laude, et admiratione digna sunt; nihil enim quod non sit optimum neque scribere soles, neque potes. Quibus de causis si te omnes nostri et veneratione, et amore merito prosequuntur, quidni ego tibi omnino sim devotus, qui videam pro tua in me benevolentia factum esse, ut descriptionem solemnis Florentiam ingressus Leonis ipsius Pontificis a me an. MDCCXCIII. editam, fere ex toto in insigne tuum opus retuleris?

Non erit itaque, quod in me reprehendas, si opusculum hoc de Bello Senensi a Petro Angelio Bargaeo viro eloquentissimo exaratum, tibi, quamvis inscio, et inconsulto, inscribam, ut posterorum memoriæ transmittatur, quantum tibi bonæ literæ debeant, et quantum opis ad illas, sed nostras præcipue, amplificandas, atque illustrandas attuleris. Accipe igitur libenter in grati animi

mei perenne monumentum hoc munusculum tui nominis splendore superbum, et vale Anglicæ literaturæ immortale decus, et ornamentum.

Dabam Florentiæ v. Kal. Octobris An. M.DCCC.IX.

No. XI.

CAPITOLO

DI LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

DESTATI pigro ingegno da quel sonno,
Che par che gli occhi tuoi d'un vel ricopra,
Onde veder la verità non ponno:
Svegliati homai; contempla, ogni tua opra
Quanto disutil sia, vana, e fallace,
Poi che il desio à la ragione è sopra.
Deh pensa, quanto falsamente piace
Honore, utilitate, over diletto,
Ove per piu s'afferma esser la pace.
Pensa alla dignità del tuo intelletto,
Non dato per seguir cosa mortale,
Ma perche havesti il cielo per suo obietto:
Sai per esperienza, quanto vale
Quel ch' altri chiama ben, dal ben piu scosto,
Che l'oriente dall' occidentale.
Quella vaghezza, ch' à gli occhi ha proposto
Amor, et comminciò ne' teneri anni,
D' ogni tuo viver lieto t' ha diposto.
Brieve, fugace, falsa, et pien d'affanni,
Ornata in vista, ma è poi crudel mostro,
Che tien lupi, e delfin sotto i bei panni.
Deh pensa qual sarebbe il viver nostro,
Se quel, che de' tener la prima parte,
Preso havesse il camin, qual io t' ho mostro.

Pensa, se tanto tempo, ingegno, o arte
Havessi volto al piu giusto disìo,
Ti potresti hor in pace consolarte.
Se ver te fosse il tuo voler piu pio,
Forse quel che per te si brama, o spera,
Conosceresti me' s' è buono, o rio.
Dell' età tua la verde primavera
Hai consumata, et forse tal fia il resto,
Fin che del verno sia l'ultima sera.
Sotto falsa ombra, et sotto rio pretesto
Persuadendo à te che gentilezza,
Che vien dal cuor, ha causato questo.
Questi tristi legami horamai spezza:
Leva dal collo tuo quella catena,
Ch' avolto vi tenea falsa bellezza:
Et la vana speranza, che ti mena,
Leva dal cuor, et fa il governo pigli
Di te la parte piu bella, et serena:
Et sottometta questa à' tuoi artigli
Ogni disir al suo voler contrario,
Con maggior forza, et con maggior consigli,
Si che sbattuto il suo tristo aversario
Non drizzi piu la venenosa cresta,
Ma resti vile et mercenario.
Quattro venti in mar fanno ogni tempesta,
Percotendo la nostra fragil barca,
Da coste, poppa, prua, che mai non resta.
Questi la fanno d' ignoranza carca,
Tal che convien che per perduta corra,
Ch' esser de' d' ogni ben' albergo et arca.
Con questo tristo incarco par che scorra,
Et ne' piu cari luoghi, ove star suole
Le cose pretiose, et la Zavorra.
Il primo vento, che percuotér vuole

Il disiato legno, è vana spene;
Da prua il corso le interrompe e tole.
Da poppa assai piu furiosa viene
Con grande impeto, et forza la paura,
Ch' in gran travaglio il miser legno tiene.
Da costa il ben, ch' al mondo poco dura,
Vana letitia, che percuote forte
La barca, et falla in mar poco sicura.
Da l'altra costa in simigliante sorte
E' il presente dolor, che molto strigne;
Questo fa nostra vita parer morte.
Hor l' un, hor l' altro d' esti venti pigne
Il tristo legno in si crudel procella,
Hor tutti insieme, hor di lor parte il cigne.
Questi la vista de la fida stella
Tolgono al buon nocchier: di tanta nube
Ricopron l'aria, ch' era chiara, et bella.
Onde convien, che doloroso cube,
Lasciando il legno à discretion de l'onda:
Che par ch' à ogn' hor se lo ingiottisce, et rube.
Et se gratia divina non v'abonda,
Che 'l buon nocchier risorga, attrito, et morto,
Parmi che 'l mar gia la ricuopra, e asconda.
Vedol' in van chiamar, o sperar porto,
E in van pentirsi quei, che cagion funno
Di prendere il camino vano, e torto.
Perche il giusto voler del gran Nettunno
Raro si piega à preghi di colui,
Ch' è d' ignoranza, o di malitia alunno.
Deh prendi essempio pel danno d'altrui,
Over pel tuo: perche, già in simil briga,
Puoi veramente dir, ancora io fui.
Sei ancora, et sarai insin ch' estriga
Il tuo veloce curro quel che siede,

Ove seder dovrebbe fido auriga.
Il disìo nostro se piu ha, piu chiede,
Et come non hà *fin, non hà quiete.*
Non si può *ben posar, chi mai non siede:*
Ma quanto piu *l'insatiabil sete*
Ricorre al *tristo fonte, che la spenga,*
Tanto piu cresce *insin che passi Lete.*
Questo convien che per *ragion' avenga.*
L'alma creata alle perfette cose
Non par contenta in perfettion si tenga.
Onde convien, che cerchi, et mai non pose,
Fin ch'ella trovi quel ch'al fin desia,
Che lei per segno al tuo balestro pose.
Ma spesse volte, mentre che s'invia
Scorta da trista, et da nemica guida,
Pria che trovi il suo ben, cade tra via.
Dunque convien, ben guardi in chi si fida,
Et à chi dia del suo cavallo il freno
Pria che 'n cercar, o in caminar s'intrida.
Bisogna ben conosca il troppo, o il meno:
Che di la, o di qua di tal confine
Mai non si trova il vero ben à pieno.
Et benche il tuo proposito, e 'l tuo fine
Sia buono, et quasi avenga in ogni mente,
Pur si va per diverse discipline.
Sono infinite vie, et differente:
Et quel, che si ricerca, solo è uno:
Però si trova sì difficilmente.
Un picciol sasso per la via, un pruno,
Che s' intraversi al piè *fragil, et lento,*
Di soave cibo il fa digiuno:
Onde gli avien dipoi contrario evento:
Che l' anima pigliando l' altra volta,
Prova per ben ogni crudel tormento.

In questa ambage inviluppata e' nvolta,
Tanto pena à veder il vero lume,
Che la virtu visiva al fin gli è tolta:
Cosi convien sempre arda, et si consume.
Perche il dominio del natural corso
Per lunga usanza hà preso il rio costume.
Però pon mente al tuo danno occorso,
Pria che la trista usanza in te più possa,
Che non potrebbe il ragionevol morso;
Pria che cavi à te stesso quella fossa,
Nella qual poco *dopo tristo caggia*
Per mai più *non cavarne se non l'ossa.*
Guarda il celeste *Sol, che splende e raggia,*
Guarda che dolce *frutto da lui cade,*
Che null' altro gli piace chi l' *assaggia.*
Deh lascia le calcate triste strade,
Et volgi gli occhi à cose eterne et belle,
Tanto più belle, quanto son piu rade.
Non di falsa bellezza, come quelle
Ornate, che t' han dato tanto affanno,
E 'l sentier tolto, che guida à le stelle.
Le tue operation vergogna et danno,
Queste di qua quiete, et gloria eterna,
Dopo il greve camino à l' alma fanno.
Ben è cieco colui, che non discerna,
Quanto sia differente lo splendore
Del Sol dal falso lume di lucerna.
Dir piu non mi permette il mio ardore.
Sol ti soggiungo questo per espresso,
Che, s'alcun ben disia, o cerca il cuore,
Non lasci se giamai senza te stesso.

CANZONE

DI BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE.

Manca il fior giovenil de' miei prim' anni,
E dentro del cor sento
Men grate voglie; nè più 'l volto fuore
Spira, come solea, fiamma d'amore.
Fuggon più che saetta in un momento
I giorni invidiosi; e 'l tempo avaro
Ogni cosa mortal ne porta seco.
Questo viver caduco a noi sì caro
E un ombra, un sogno breve, un fumo, un vento,
Un tempestoso mare, un carcer cieco:
Ond' io pensando meco,
Tra le tenebre oscure, un lume chiaro
Scorgo della ragion, che mostra al core
Come lo sforzin gli amorosi inganni,
Gir procacciando sol tutti i suoi danni.
E parmi udire: o stolto, e pien d' obblio,
Dal pigro sonno omai
Destati, e di corregger t'apparecchia
Il folle error, che già teco s' invecchia.
Fors' è presso all' occaso, e tu nol sai,
Il Sol, ch' esser ti par sul mezzo giorno:
Onde più vaneggiar ti si disdice.
Penitenza, dolor, vergogna, e scorno
Premio di tue fatiche al fin arai;
Pur ti struggi aspettando esser felice.
Svelli l' empia radice
Di fallace speranza; e gli occhi intorno
Rivolgendo, ne' tuoi martir ti specchia;
E vedrai che null' altro è 'l tuo desio,
Che odiar te stesso, e meno amare Iddio.
Dagli occhi tal ragion la benda oscura

Mi leva, ond' io pur temo,
Veggendomi lontan fuor del cammino
A periglioso passo esser vicino:
Nè trovo il foco mitigato o scemo,
Che m' accese nel cor l' alma bellezza;
Tal ch' io non so come da morte aitarlo.
Pur s' in me resta dramma di fermezza,
Spero ancor, bench' i sia presso all' estremo,
Dall' incendio crudel vivo ritrarlo.
Ma, ahi lasso, mentre io parlo,
Sento da non so qual strania dolcezza
L' anima tratta gir dietro al divino
Lume de' duo begli occhi, ond' ella fura
Tanto piacer, ch' altro piacer non cura.
S' altri mi biasma, tu puoi dir: chi vuole
A forza navigar contrario all' onda
Con debil remo, giù scorre a seconda.

ATTO DI CONTRIZIONE

DI VINCENZO FILICAJA.

XLVII.

Padre del Ciel, che con pietose braccia
Ti stringi al seno i figli ingrati ed empj,
Pur che gli occhi sien fonti, e 'l cor si sfaccia;
Le gran follie de' miei passati tempi
Mira con guardo di pietà cortese,
E di tua grazia il mio difetto adempi:
Ch' io veggio, in rimembrar le antiche offese,
L' arco, ch' io tesi, incontro a me ritorto;
Nè fuggir posso, oimè, nè far difese.

Te dunque invoco; e s' io t' offesi a torto,
A te la soma de' gran falli miei
Pien di dolore e di vergogna io porto.
E pria, che reo di colpa, esser vorrei
Nel cupo centro de' Tartarei abissi
Tra 'l pianto eterno; e tra gli eterni omei;
O che Morte cortese, anzi ch 'i' aprissi
Quest' empie luci al Sol, m'avesse spento;
Onde ver fosse il dir: Non fui, nè vissi.
Ma vissi, oimè, pur troppo, e troppo io sento
L' acerbo giogo, e l' insoffribil pondo
Di quelle colpe, ond' io mi doglio e pento.
Nè poria 'l Gange, o l' Ocean profondo
Con tutte l' acque del suo giro immenso
Far l' impuro mio cor candido e mondo.
Tu sol puoi torre all' egra vista il denso
Velo, e tu render luminoso e terso
Quanto ha d' oscuro e di fangoso il senso,
E dall' antico me vario e diverso
Farmi, ed altr' uom da quel, ch'io sono ed era,
E unir lo spirto in vanità disperso.
Signor, di me t' incresca, anzi ch'io pera:
Che 'l fin s' appressa del mio viver brieve,
E già vedo imbrunir l' ultima sera.
Nè, perchè fredda età sparso di neve
Ancor non m' abbia il crine, ho men paura:
Che ad ognora esser può quel, ch' esser deve.
I' veggio 'l tempo traditor, che fura
Celatamente i mesi, e i giorni, e l' ore,
E scioglie in polve ogni mortal fattura:
Veggio secche le frondi, e veggio il fiore
De' miei verd' anni calpestato, e sfatto
Il color fresco, e 'l giovenil vigore,

E l' ingegno, e 'l valor guasto e disfatto,
E veggio Morte, più che mai feroce,
Col braccio alzato di ferirmi in atto.
Onde rotta dal pianto alzo la voce,
E priegoti, Signor, per quello strazio,
Che morendo per me soffristi in Croce:
Toglimi al gran periglio, e dammi spazio
Di tanto lagrimar, quant' io t' offesi:
Ch'io son del Mondo, e di sue frodi sazio.
Ahi quanti lacci a me medesmo ho tesi,
E quante notti senza sonno, e quanti
Dì senza posa inutilmente ho spesi,
Dal fascino soave, e dagl' incanti
Vinto, e dà i vezzi di bugiarda fama
D' insidie piena, e di travagli tanti!
Questa fu, lasso, l'ingannevol trama,
Del mio viver la tela ond' empier volli;
E a tal cote aguzzai l' incauta brama.
Oh malnate speranze, oh pensier folli,
Oh miei studj infelici al vento sparsi,
Per cui l' Alma ho sì trista, e gli occhi molli!
A che scriver sull' onde, a che fondarsi
In debil' aura di fortuna infida,
Che tutta in fior si sfoga, e i frutti ha scarsi?
Oh quanto erra colui, che 'l Mondo in guida
Prendesi! ed a che strazio, ed a quai pene,
Ed a qual morte va chi in lui si fida!
Prima ondeggiar sull' infeconde arene
Le bionde spighe mireransi, e prima
Fian de' fiumi e del mar secche le vene,
E 'l cielo in fondo, e 'l basso centro in cima,
E mobile la terra, e l' onde immote,
E l' alta parte obbediente all' ima;

Ch'ei non sia qual fu sempre, e le sue note
Arti non usi, e non sian finti i vezzi,
E le promesse sue d' effetto vote.
Il san quest' occhi a lagrimar sì avvezzi,
E sallo il core, e i mie' pensieri il sanno,
Che trovaro in lui sempre onte, e disprezzi,
E falso riso, e lusinghiero inganno,
E puri affanni, e placer brevi e misti,
Ed incerti guadagni, e certo danno,
Perdite amare, e tormentosi acquisti,
Inquieto riposo, e fiera pace,
Notti confuse, e dì turbati e tristi,
Mal, che sempre sta fermo, e ben fugace,
Libertà serva, e lealtà infedele,
Speme, che pasce, e in un distrugge e sface,
Desire a se rubello, altrui fedele,
Infami onori, e gloria oscura e tetra,
E in dolce assenzio attossicato mele.
Non, se voce di tromba or questa cetra
Dal mio duolo impetrasse, e votar tutta
Potess' io la poetica faretra,
De i ciechi affetti la terribil lutta
Dir sapria, nè i pensier fastosi e vani,
Che hanno l' alma mia folle a tal condutta:
Nè se con lingue cento, e cento mani,
O parlassi, o scrivessi, un sol poria
De' miei danni ridir tanti, e sì strani.
Scorgimi dunque a più sicura via,
Padre e Signore: e se gran tempo errai,
Vinca i miei falli tua pietà natia;
E dopo affanni tanti, e tanti guai,
Me disviato stanco peregrino
A te richiama; ed è ben tempo omai;

Che al gran passo fatal son già vicino,
E già varcato (ahi rimembranza acerba!)
Ho più di mezzo il natural cammino.
Questo misero avanzo a te si serba,
Misero avanzo di fallita etade,
Ch'ogni suo frutto ha consumato in erba.
Ma se asciutto non è di tua pietade
Il vivo fonte, e se mai sempre aperte
Son di salute al peccator le strade;
Queste mie tarde, ahi troppo tarde offerte,
Non fia, Signor, che tu rigetti, o sdegni,
Benchè mercede il mio pregar non merte.
Ecco che i desir vani, e i folli sdegni
Quì depongo a' tuoi piedi, e quì gli uccido
Vittime de' tuoi giusti alti disdegni;
E del mio cuor le chiavi a te sol fido,
Fuggendo il Mondo, e le reliquie estreme
De i gran naufragj miei traendo al lido.
Ecco recisi dell' incauta speme
I rinascenti capi, e fin dall' ime
Radici svelto il velenoso seme,
E rintuzzate le taglienti lime,
Che mi rosero il cuore, e di man tolte
Al senso vincitor mie spoglie opime.
Già si diradan le gravose e folte
Nebbie, che il Divin Sole apre e saetta;
E già in fuga ne van rotte e sconvolte.
Nell' armi sue Ragion chiusa e ristretta,
Già pugna e vince, e fa di mille oltraggi,
E di ben mille offese alta vendetta.
Ond' io più saldi, e più devoti omaggi,
Signor, ti rendo, e con più ardenti passi
La scorta segno de' tuoi santi raggi;

Nè di sonoro grido aura, che passi,
Nè bel fumo d' onor più mi lusinga:
Che questo è 'l calle, onde alla morte vassi,
Nè vo' ch' edera, o mirto il crin mi cinga,
Nè che profano inchiostro il nome mio
Alla futura età mostri e dipinga.
La tua Croce, Signor, sia la mia Clio,
E celeste Ippocrene alla mia sete
Del Sangue sparso il prezioso rio,
E del Calvario le funebri e chete
Ombre apran sì della mia mente i rai,
Che quanto a te fur meste, a me sian liete.
I' benedico l' ora, in ch' io mirai,
Mercè d' un dolce tuo possente sguardo,
Con odio e duol quel, ch'io si forte amai;
E benedico l' amoroso dardo,
Che con piaga vitale il cuor mi sana;
E ringrazio la fiamma, ond' io tutt' ardo.
Segua pur' altri fuggitiva e vana
Ombra di ben, che, se talor si accosta,
Dopo un finto apparir più s' allontana:
Che da lei quanto più l' alma si scosta,
In Dio viepiù s' immerge, e più non vuole
Pentimento comprar, che tanto costa.
Chi sparge al Mondo i semi, altro non suole
Mieter, che stento; ma chi t' ama e serve,
Di scarso guiderdon mai non si duole.
Mentr' io sono ancor mio, mentre ancor ferve
Entro le vene il sangue, alla tua voglia
Sian le mie voglie ubbidienti e serve;
E del mio petto la guardata soglia
Altro amor non ricetti, e 'l varco chiuda
Rimembranza, timor, vergogna, e doglia.

Quando al gran dì mia coscienza ignuda
A te starà davanti, e contra l' uso
La tua pietà d' ogni pietà fia nuda;
E quando scampo il peccator confuso
Cercando in vano, e in van cercando aita,
Vedrà gli abissi aperti, e 'l Ciel già chiuso;
Che mi varran della passata vita
I lunghi errori, e l' insaziabil fame,
Di speranze amarissime nodrita?
E i van disegni, e le ventose brame,
Che su questa mia fronte a note chiare
Porterò scritte, e senz' alcun velame?
Deh mi vaglia il tuo Sangue, e queste amare
Stille, Signor, ch' io verso, e 'l priego umile,
Che al tuo giusto rigor forza può fare;
Ond' io non oda la gran voce ostile
Dell' orribil sentenza, e me non veggia
Fuor del tuo dolce fortunato ovile
Membro infelice d' infelice greggia
Irne d' alta mestizia e d' orror pieno,
Qual' uom, che morte aspetti, e morte chieggia.
Ma omai lentato a maggior doglia il freno,
Tal sorge vena di perpetuo umore,
Che la voce m' annega in mezzo al seno.
Onde l' Anima tutta, e 'l buon dolore,
Che a Dio ne rimarita, unisco e serro
In un sospiro messaggier del cuore;
E in silenzio, che parla, i lumi atterro
Tra speme, e tema; e di tua grazia i fonti
Sol con chiave di Fede apro e disserro.
Oh quai sussidj al gran bisogno hai pronti,
Se di te mi fo scudo, e intera e salva
Servo mia Fé, finchè 'l mio dì tramonti!
Tu, Signor, mi creasti, e tu mi salva.

No. XII.

SOPRA

LORENZO IL MAGNIFICO;

POEMA INEDITO

DEL SIG. MARCHESE DI MONTRONE.

Articolo del Sig. Luigi Muzzi, inserito nel Numero III. del giornale enciclopedico letterario di Firenze del Marzo 1814.

Il Signor Marchese di Montrone, Ciamberlano di S. M. il Re delle due Sicilie, compone un poema, il cui titolo è *Lorenzo il Magnifico.* Materia di altissimo canto; poichè, oltre al rammemorarne i tempi più lieti dell' Italia per le bell' arti e per le scienze, viene altresì a farne conoscere come Lorenzo fu l' autore dell' equilibrio politico de' Potentati Europei; equilibrio che ha servito poscia e serve tuttavia di norma alle negoziazioni e alle paci de' Potentati medesimi.—Questo poema è d' un genere onninamente nuovo; avvegnachè nè al Furioso si può rassembrare, nè alla Gerusalemme, nè ad alcun altro dopo l' Odissea d' Omero, su' vestigi della quale pare che il chiarissimo Autore siasi messo. Perchè, siccome l' Odissea è un poema di politica domestica e civile, così questo tutto di politica civile è pieno. Il perno, su cui muove la sua macchina, è il viaggio spontaneo di Lorenzo a Napoli, negli anni 1478, a Ferdinando d'Aragona. È noto l' odio della Casa d' Aragona contro la

de' Medici, perchè quella in questa vedeva il solo ostacolo alle sue mire ambiziose. Quindi Ferdinando, collegatosi con Papa Sisto IV., e cercato per molte vie di estinguere Lorenzo, e riuscito vano in parte il tentativo della Congiura de' Pazzi, si rivolsero entrambi a guerra aperta. Le vicende della quale, dubbie, ma sempre pericolosissime per Lorenzo, a cagione d' un partito che avea polso nella città di Firenze, detto de' Libertini, di cui era capo Frate Girolamo Savonarola, null' altra speranza rimaneva al Medici per salvare la patria e l' Italia, che darsi volontario in mano del re. Alla quale impresa accintosi coraggiosamente con sommo risico della vita, ne campò glorioso, non con altro schermo che con quello della sua magnanimità e prudenza. Quindi l' autore giustamente incomincia il poema cosi:

Canta, o Dea, quel Magnanimo, che vinse
Col sagace ardimento e col consiglio
D' un Re lo sdegno e 'l civil odio estinse.
D' un Re che adverso 'l Fiorentino giglio
Dal suol campano l'Aragonia insegna
Spingea con arme sotto Alfonso il figlio.
Tanta in petto avarizia è di chi regna,
Che mal crede serbar sua possa intera,
Se l'unghie nel vicino a por non vegna!.

Questo poema è già condotto a diciassette canti; i quali sono in terza rima, perchè, non dovendo trattar di battaglie, alle quali meglio si condice l' ottava, ha creduto l' autore affarsi più il metro usato dal nostro maggior poeta. Servono ad arricchirlo molti begli episodj, intromessi a romperne il serio, il grave e l' istruttivo; e che, sebbene strettamente, qual vuolsi, congiunti all' unità dell' azione, servono però più particolarmente al diletto.

Lo stile da una sorgente è attinto: da Dante egli, l' Autore, ne ha sì bene imitati i robusti concetti e i modi grandiosi e il forte, come disse il Salvini, fiancheggiato dalla vaghezza, senza il tropp' irto ed austero; in breve, per dirlo alla dantesca, si è così illuiato, che quando apparrà alla luce un sì nobil poema, giurerai non poter esser opera di questi tempi. Il bello stil, che gli fe' tanto onore, già si vide nel suo *Peplo* in morte di Lodovico Savioli, nelle *Rime varie*, nel *Prometeo* a Canova: le quali poesie, a formare il Canzoniere di questo prestantissimo poeta, si stampano adesso a Napoli tutte raccolte. Nulladimeno, spero, soprannomi grado i leggitori amanti del Bello, se anche del sullodato poema riporterò quì alcuni squarci, sotto i quali giova mettere l' epigrafe: *ab ungue Leo.*

L. M.

DAL CANTO I.

PEROCCHE dove un popolo disvia
Per discorde voler, poscia non torna
Si agevolmente alla dimessa via.
Nè mai di libertà lume raggiorna
Se di tenebre il mondo non ricopre
Servaggio in prima. Così bella e adorna
Veggiam la terra al nuovo Sol che scopre
Ciò che ascose la notte; e così chiare
Per libertà nascente appajon l' opre.
Ma quando ella sen corre al tramontare
Mal s'argomenta chi volger retrorso
La vuol, che 'ndarno fien le pruove e amare.

* * *

Col campo incontro all' Aragonio Marte
Stiè Gostanzo di Sforza, onde si paja
Quanto diversa è al dir di vincer l' arte.

Perchè vittoria ove è virtù sol raja
E a' Termopili cadder gloriosi
I trecento che ucciser le migliaja.

DAL CANTO VIII.

Ma pria che a dolorar torni la mente
Per la briga civil di ch' io cantai
E m' è forza cantar vie più dolente,
De la miseria de' cantati guai
Prendiam ristoro in queste amene valli
Che mira il Sol di sì benigni rai.
Qui molli prati e liquidi cristalli,
Qui odorosi laureti e mirti belli,
Qui Silvani e Napee fanno lor balli.
Qui 'nfino al petto ne' freschi ruscelli
Il grosso armento scende e si disseta;
Qui rodono le punte agli arboscelli
Camuse capre; qui per l' erba lieta
Va pascolando la gregge lanuta
E torna a casa di latte repleta.
Non di Molorco a la stagion canuta
Si vantino le mandre, e non la chiara
Tempe, che 'l verde suo giammai non muta:
Non di Menalo i boschi e la fiumara
Pingue, che 'l Delta in due rami feconda;
Non Cipri lieta a la sua Dea sì cara.
Che di quantunque ben natura abbonda
Ambra sola racchiude, Ambra romita.
La qual come isoletta Ombron circonda:
Ombron che a l' amor suo d' onda gradita
Bagna con lento corso li piè molli
Ove assai pesci a dolce albergo invita.

DAL CANTO XVII.

Siede Bologna appiè di verdi colli
D' Apennin sovr' un piano intra due fiumi
Che fan suoi campi dilettosi e molli.
Ebbe in pria dagli Etruschi leggi e numi:
Sgombra di Galli al fin per le Romane
Aquile rinnovò genti e costumi.
E quando Italia al giogo e all' armi strane
Ritratta in più governi si divise,
Libera crebbe fra città sovrane.
Crebber gli studi che 'n suo grembo assise
Teodosio il secondo; nè fortuna
O tempo o brando avverso li conquise.
Ma non di parti dall' umor digiuna
Che ribolliva d' ogni 'ntorno stette:
E più volte mirò di sangue bruna
De' suoi figli la terra, a turpi strette
Quei menandola e quei che del nemico
Sulle sparse fortune in piè ristette.
Pur se alcun surse di giustizia amico
Dalla briga civil, non però tanto
Ei visse che parer facesse antico
Il ben che ristorava il lungo pianto.
Ma come Tebe col figliuol perdeo
Di Polimno il valor che le diè vanto
Sulle greche città, cotal si feo
Bologna ricca di senno e di pace,
Poi nuda al venir men del suo Taddeo.
Così torcendo dal cammin verace
Per l' intestina ambizion pervenne
Di mano in mano a quei sotto cui giace.

LORENZO IL MAGNIFICO,

POEMA INEDITA DEL SIGNOR MARCHESE DI MONTRONE.

Giornale delle Due Sicilie, &c.

MANCAVA all' Italia, madre di ogni civiltà, e però a' popoli moderni, un poema che neppur ebbero i nostri Latini, il quale andasse per li vestigj dell' Odissea, unica ancora nella Grecia medesima: ove fu bensì non solo chi l' Iliade imitasse, ma eziandio chi ne seguisse la favola. Così molti fra Latini tennero dietro ad Omero, ed a Virgilio stesso, il quale nella sua Eneide volle de' due poemi omerici giovarsi. Ma niuno è stato fino a questi tempi che un poema non di battaglie e di espugnazioni di città, ma tutto di cose civili avesse meditato: mentrechè con novelli caratteri e novelli modi ingegni assai pellegrini ci lasciarono poemi non inferiori a quelli de' nostri antichi. Grandissima adunque fu a noi la maraviglia, allorchè ci venne alle mani un articolo del num. 3. del Giornale Enciclopedico letterario di Firenze del Marzo 1814, ove scorgemmo da un nostro illustre cittadino essersi lodevolmente tentata un' opera somigliante all' Odissea.

Il nome del Signor Marchese di Montrone, notissimo già per tutta Italia ed oltre i monti dalle varie e dotte rime più volte pubblicate in Milano ed in Bologna, non avea mestieri di maggiori titoli alla fama. Ma ora con ammirazione veggiamo di quelle rime essersi l' autore servito come di esercizio d' arte, onde apparecchiarsi all' alto lavoro di cui intendiamo parlare. Veramente era-

vamo dolenti che un cavaliere, il quale per le sue poetiche dottrine tanto onora questa sua patria, fosse stato più largo agli estranei che a noi delle sue belle opere. Ma Bologna, ov' egli si educò e visse alle lettere per tre lustri interi, dovea accoglier prima i parti nobilissimi dell' ingegno di lui, i quali pur tardi a noi giunsero. Nondimeno crebbe il nostro dolore nel vederci ultimamente debitori ad un Toscano scrittore del sapere che il poema intitolato Lorenzo il Magnifico sia per uscire alla luce con grande aspettazione de' letterati Italiani cui ne sono già noti i pregi.

Ma se alcuna cosa valeva in parte a quietare il nostro animo, si era il potere ancor noi partecipare al piacere di conoscere sì maraviglioso lavoro. Il che essendoci per una strana ventura, che qui non accade narrare, toccato di ottenere, intendiamo ora brevemente, per quanto il comporta un articolo di Gazzetta, farne parola, onde i nostri cittadini abbiano da noi pegno non volgare di patria carità,

Questo poema adunque, se si mira al soggetto, è il più bello di quanti mai sono stati. Perchè se all' autore mancasse in alcun modo il pregio dell' esecuzione, avrà sempre grandissimo quello del trovato. Qual cosa infatti più alta di toccare i migliori tempi della gloria Italiana sotto la Casa de' Medici, ove Lorenzo il Magnifico siede nel mezzo fra la incominciata grandezza del vecchio Cosimo, e la perfezione di Leon Decimo? Lorenzo che fu pure l' inventore di quella bilancia politica degli Stati, che servì poscia e serve tuttavia di norma a' principi di Europa. A tutti è noto da quali torbide ambizioni era agitata allora l' Italia: mentre i Veneziani dall' un canto, e la Casa d' Aragona dall' altro, cercavano recarsi alle

mani il dominio intero di quella. E la Repubblica Fiorentina posta tra que' due soverchianti poteri, e internamente commossa dalle brighe popolari, cedendo per poco all' uno di essi, avrebbe alla fine compiuto il disegno dell' ambizione: se non era pur Lorenzo il quale coll' armi e più coll' ingegno resistendo alle due parti, potè fermar l' equilibrio delle Potenze Italiane. Ma per giugnere a tanto e sì lodevol fine dovè porre a pericolo più volte la vita. Non dirò delle replicate insidie a lui tese nella persona; parlo solo di quell' atto oltre ogni uman credere generoso, quando votò il suo capo per la patria, e per l' Italia tutta. Ecco il perno su di cui gira il poema.

Onde se l' Odissea ha per base i varj accorgimenti e il sapere di Ulisse, e l' Iliade l' ira di Achille, e l' Eneide la pietà del Trojano, questo novello poema è poggiato su la magnanimità di Lorenzo. Nè crediamo che nella mente di quell' accortissimo figliuol di Laerte sarebbe mai caduto un tanto pensiero qual venne a Lorenzo: pensiero di magnanimità senza pari, che pur valse più che le cento schiere argive a vincere l' odio ostinato dell' Aragonese.

Gli episodj poi che ornano questo poema, unico fra' moderni, sono varj e belli. Il carattere maraviglioso del Savonarola fa più rilucere col contrapposto quello dell' eroe. L' amor conjugale della Clarice non è men bello di quello di Penelope. L' ardente fede del prode giovinetto Ridolfi è mirabile oltremodo. I caratteri poi tutti sono maestrevolmente pennelleggiati, sì che nulla sembra desiderarsi alla perfezione.

Che se volessimo a parte a parte descrivere le bellezze di questo poema, sarebbe opera di lungo ragionamento. Però crediamo avere abbastanza soddisfatto al nostro proposito, dicendone non meno di quello che per l' autore dell' articolo Toscano fu detto.

No. XIII.

Histoire Litteraire d'Italie, par P. L. Ginguenè, tom. iii. p. 486.

Voila tout ce que la poésie italienne, après un si brillant essor, peut citer pendant toute la première moitié du quinzième siècle, et pendant même une partie de la seconde. Mais un homme alors s'éleva, que la nature avait formé pour tous les genres de gloire, et qui ne contribua pas moins par son génie, son goût, et son exemple, que par ses libéralités et ses encouragements de toute espèce, à redonner à la lyre italienne ses sons brillants et son premier éclat. J'ai dit de Laurent de Médicis que, quand il n'eût pas été élevé si haut par son ambition et par sa fortune, il l'eût été, par son talent poétique, aux premiers rangs de la littérature. Quelques détails sur ses poésies, dont je n'ai donné qu'un simple aperçu, suffiront pour le prouver.

Les premières qu'il fit dans sa jeunesse, furent des poésies amoureuses, des sonnets et des canzoni. Ce ne fut cependant point l'amour qui le rendit poète : ce fut en quelque sorte la poésie qui le rendit amant.* L'aventure est assez singulière pour qu'il ait cru devoir la rapporter dans les commentaires qu'il a faits lui même sur

* M. Roscoë, *the Life of Lorenzo*, etc., ch. 2.

ses poésies. Une jeune dame, que l'on croit être la belle Simonetta,* maîtresse de son frère Julien, mourut à Florence. Sa mort excita les plus vifs regrets: tous les poètes la célébrèrent à l'envi. Laurent voulut aussi la chanter, et pour le faire avec plus d'expression et de vérité, il s'efforça de se persuader que c'était lui qui avait perdu l'objet de son amour. Il se la représentait avec tous ses charmes, et tâchait d'exprimer le désespoir de celui qui l'avait perdue.† L'habitude des sentiments tendres lui fit chercher ensuite s'il n'y avait point à Florence quelque autre Beauté qui méritât d'en exciter de pareils, et d'être célébrée de son vivant comme cette femme charmante l'était après sa mort. Quand un jeune homme de vingt ans fait cette recherche, il ne la fait pas long-temps en vain. Laurent trouva dans une fête une dame aussi aimable et encore plus belle que celle qu'il avait chantée; elle fut depuis ce moment l'objet de sa passion et de ses vers. Il ne l'a nommée nulle part, mais on sait qu'elle se nommait Lucrèce, de l'illustre famille des Donati. Cette passion fut, à ce qu'il paraît, toute poétique. Dans plus de cent quarante sonnets et dans une vingtaine de canzoni, les espérances, les craintes, les désirs de l'amant, les rigueurs, les refus, l'absence, le retour, le sourire, les douces paroles de la dame, sont décrits à la manière de Pétrarque; avec moins de force et des couleurs poétiques moins éclatantes, mais quel-

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* C'est M. Roscoë qui le conjecture, d'après une épigramme de Politien. Voy. *the Life of Lorenzo*, etc., édit. de Bâle, t. ii. p. 113, *note*.

† C'est le sujet des quatre sonnets qui remplissent le folio 42 de l'édition d'Alde, 1554. L'exposition que Laurent fait dans son Commentaire, des degrés par lesquels il passa de cet amour imaginaire à une passion réelle (folio 123—132, de la même édition), intéresse par la naïveté des aveux autant que par l'élégante simplicité du style.

quefois avec autant de douceur et d'harmonie, plus de naturel et de simplicité.

L'une des qualités qui caractérisent plus particulièrement le vrai poète brille éminemment dans les vers de Médicis; c'est cette imagination vive et prompte à se représenter tous les objets de la nature, à les rapprocher par des comparaisons de celui qu'on veut peindre, et à peindre les objets eux-mêmes sous les couleurs les plus frappantes et les images les plus vraies.

Dans le sonnet et dans la canzone, Laurent suivit les mêmes formes dont Pétrarque et d'autres poètes plus anciens avaient tracé le modèle. Il employa l'octave inventée par Boccace, dans des stances souvent réimprimées sous le titre de *Selve d'Amore*,* à l'exemple des Sylves du poète Stace, titre dont ce n'est pas ici le lieu d'expliquer la signification et l'origine. Ce morçeau, qui est de longue haleine, et qui ne contient pas moins de cent quarante octaves, est plein de mouvement, d'imagination, de descriptions et d'allégories. L'auteur se plaint de l'absence de sa maîtresse; il s'en plaint à elle, à l'Amour, à toute la nature; mais bientôt il se promet son retour; alors tout est changé, la nature s'embellit; il ne voit plus autour de lui que des images de bonheur; et selon la pente habituelle de ses idées, ou, si l'on veut, de ses sentiments, ce sont encore des images champêtres. Les rameaux desséchés se revêtiront de feuilles nouvelles;† les buissons arides se couvriront de fleurs; les

* Dans la plus ancienne édition de ces stances, citée par M. Roscoë, Pesaro, 1513, elles sont intitulées: *Stanze bellissime et ornatissime intitulate le Selve d'Amore*, etc. Dans l'éditione d'Alde, elles n'ont d'autre titre que *Stanze*.

† *Lieta e maravigliosa i rami secchi*, etc.—SELVE D'AMORE, St. 21.

oiseaux reprendront leurs chants ; les abeilles et les fourmis leurs travaux interrompus. Les bergers reconduiront sur les montagnes leurs troupeaux ennuyés de l'étable où ils languissent pendant l'hiver ; et là dessus, il décrit la vie de ces bergers et leurs innocents plaisirs, et leur bonne-chère frugale, et leur paisible et profond sommeil. Des descriptions mythologiques suivent ces tableaux villageois ; toute la nature est animée pour célébrer cet heureux retour. Le poète voit les objets comme s'ils étaient présents. Sa maîtresse vient embellir son modeste et riant asyle ; tout y respire le bonheur. Seulement une vieille femme est assise dans un coin obscur,* pâle, muette, poussant des soupirs, fuyant la lumière du jour, couverte d'un manteau d'une couleur incertaine et changeante. C'est la Jalousie. L'auteur en fait un portrait fidèle et hideux ; il en trace l'histoire depuis le moment où elle naquit avec l'Amour, fils comme elle de l'antique Chaos. Il la maudit, et paraît soulever contre elle la nature entière ; ensuit il s'adresse à l'Espérance, et c'est l'Amour lui-même qui lui en trace le portrait.† Mais à la fin de cette peinture poétique le poète philosophe se montre, et l'on peut dire que les couleurs en sont plus fortes qu'à l'Amour n'appartient. " De toutes parts les songes, les augures, les mensonges la suivent, ainsi que tous les arts trompeurs, la chiromancie, les sorts, les fausses prophéties, soit verbales, soit écrites sur des papiers menteurs qui annoncent ce qui doit être lorsqu'il est arrivé, et l'alchimie, et celle qui de la terre prétend mesurer les cieux, et la conjecture qui suit la volonté, etc."

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* *Solo una vecchia in un oscuro canto*, etc. St. 39.

† *È una donna di statura immensa*, etc. St. 67.

Il l'était même dans les matières les plus difficiles et les plus relevées de la philosophie. Dans sa jeunesse, et dès le temps où la philosophie platonicienne était un des objets favoris de ses études, il entreprit de mettre en vers une partie des dogmes de cette philosophie, applicable à la vie commune, et il le fit non seulement avec cette clarté précieuse qui lui était naturelle, mais en plaçant ses explications dans un cadre qui prouve un rare élévation d'ame et une grande supériorite d'esprit. On sait au milieu de quelle fortune et de quel pouvoir il était né. Ce qui gonfle d'orgueil les ames communes et les petits esprits ne changea rien à son heureuse et noble nature. Il vit les objets tels qu'ils sont, et ne s'exagéra ni les avantages de la richesse et de la grandeur, ni ceux de la vie pastorale et champêtre, souvent enviée par ceux qui ne la connaissent pas. Dans un poëme divisé en six chapitres, qui porte le titre *d'Altercation*,* il se représente quittant la ville pour jouir pendant quelques jours des plaisirs de la campagne; il rencontre un berger qui conduit son troupeau, et il s'entretient avec lui sur le souverain bien. " Chez vous," lui dit-il, " heureux bergers, ne règnent ni la haine ni la perfidie cruelle; l'ambition ne peut naître dans vos sillons. Le bien que vous possédez n'excite point d'envie; l'avarice n'a chez

* Ce poëme, imprimé sans date, mais probablement vers la fin du quinzième siècle, sous ce titre : ALTERCATIONE, *overo Dialogo composto dal magnifico Lorenzo di Piero, di Cosimo de' Medici*, etc., in 12, n'ayant jamais été reimprimé, était devenu si rare, qu'il ne se trouve ni dans la Bibliothèque italienne de Fontanini, ni dans celle de Haym, ni dans le Catalogue de Floncel, ni dans aucune Bibliographie. Il remplit quarante pages in 4°. de la belle édition des Poésies de Lorenzo de' Medici, donnée à Londres, 1801, in 4°., pour servir de supplément à sa Vie écrite par W. Roscoe.

vous que de faibles racines, et vous vivez contents dans votre douce indolence. On ne dit point ici une chose pour une autre, et l'on n'a point une langue contraire à son propre cœur; celui dont les actions sont les meilleures est le plus heureux. Je ne crois pas que, dans un air si pur, le cœur soupire quand le rire est sur la bouche, ni que la sagesse consiste à dissimuler et à farder la vérité."

Le berger convient que cette sorte de malheur n'assiège point en effet les habitants du village, mais qu'il en est d'autres non moins cruels auxquels on y est livré; il ne fait point de peintures vagues et de lieux communs, mais représente avec une grande justesse d'idées et d'expressions les peines et les travaux de la vie champêtre. Le philosophe Marsile Ficin arrive; les deux interlocuteurs consentent à le prendre pour juge. Il développe alors, au sujet du bonheur, les dogmes de sa philosophie, c'est-à-dire, de celle de Platon. Il examine la valeur réelle de ce qu'on appelle communément biens et avantages; ce n'est point là que peut être le vrai bien; il n'existe pour notre ame que lorsqu'elle est dégagée des liens du corps; il n'existe que dans l'amour et dans la contemplation céleste. Ici-bas tous les biens sont imparfaits, et nos maux sont plus grands à mesure que notre désir du bonheur s'augmente. Notre plus grand bien n'est qu'une exemption de maux. La vie heureuse n'est donc ni celle du berger qui est si paisible, ni celle de Laurent qui paraît si belle, ni aucune autre vie mortelle, puisque la véritable félicité ne peut exister dans ce monde. L'entretien terminé, le poète resté seul adresse à l'éternelle lumière, au Dieu de Platon, une prière conforme aux grandes et nobles idées que ce philosophe

donne de la Divinité ; elle remplit le sixième et dernier chapitre de ce poëme, moins recommandable par le style que par l'élévation dès idées et des sentiments.

D'autres poésies morales, composées dans un âge plus mûr, contiennent des vérités fortes, énoncées dans un style plus nerveux et plus poétique, mais toujours avec la même clarté. Tel est ce *Capitolo* que l'auteur adresse à son esprit, à qui il reproche vivement toutes ses erreurs. "Réveille-toi, esprit paresseux,* sors de ce sommeil qui couvre tes yeux d'un voile épais, et leur cache la vérité ; réveille-toi enfin, et reconnais combien toute action est inutile, vaine et trompeuse, quand le désir l'emporte sur la raison. Pense de quel faux éclat nous éblouit ce qu'on appelle honneur, utilité, plaisir, tout ce qu'on dit être la source d'un bonheur paisible. Pense à la dignité de ton intelligence, qui ne te fut point donnée pour rechercher un bien mortel et périssable, mais pour aspirer au ciel même." La pièce entière, qui a plus de cent cinquante vers, est écrite sur ce ton, d'autant plus remarquable qu'aucun autre poète n'en avait donné l'exemple. Ce n'est ni le ton du Dante ni celui de Pétrarque dans ses *capitoli ;* c'est celui d'une espèce de satire morale dont on peut regarder Médicis comme l'inventeur.

Bien différent de ces poètes qui ne savaient chanter qu'un objet et qui passaient leur vie à aiguiser sur cet objet, quelquefois tout fantastique, la subtilité de leur esprit, Laurent appliquait son talent poétique à tout ce qui l'affectait, aux choses de la vie, à celles qui faisaient la matière de ses études, ou qui l'environnaient et frap-

* *Destati, pigro ingegno, da quel sogno,* etc.

paient habituellement ses yeux, ou qui s'y offraient subitement. Sa prédilection pour la nature champêtre paraît sans cesse dans ses vers, parce qu'elle était dans son ame. Tous les moments qu'il pouvait dérober aux affaires, il les passait dans les maisons délicieuses qu'il possédait à la campagne. Celle qu'il avait fait bâtir à Poggio Cajano, était son séjour favori. L'Ombrone y formait une île nommée Ambra, qu'il s'était plu à embellir, et il avait pris tous les moyens que l'art, employé avec une prodigalité royale, peut fournir contre la rapidité d'un fleuve et contre les inondations. Ces moyens furent inutiles; une inondation terrible emporta les embellissements, les travaux, les fabriques, la terre même, pour ainsi dire, et ne laissa que les rochers et la pierre nue. Un possesseur vulgaire n'aurait montré que des regrets et de l'emportement. Médicis y vit un sujet poétique. Sa chère Ambra devint une nymphe, aimée du jeune Lauro, berger des Alpes. Elle se baignait dans l'Ombrone pendant la chaleur du jour. Le Dieu du fleuve la voit, en est épris, veut la saisir; elle fuit le long du rivage; le fleuve la poursuit, mais en vain, jusqu'au lieu où ses eaux se jettent dans l'Arno. Il s'écrie alors, il invoque le Dieu de l'Arno et l'appelle à son aide. L'Arno se lève, court au-devant de la nymphe; elle se trouve ainsi pressée entre le fleuve qui l'arrête et le fleuve qui la suit. Fidèle à son cher Lauro, elle implore le secours des dieux. Au moment où l'Ombrone croit l'atteindre, il ne voit plus qu'un rocher qui s'élève, s'étend, s'accroît devant lui et forme une île, autour de laquelle il ne peut plus que courir. Il se repent alors, et regrette d'avoir réduit une nymphe si belle à n'être plus qu'un amas de rochers.

Ce poëme, composé de quarante-huit octaves, et pub-

lié pour la première fois par M. Roscoe,* est plein de descriptions charmantes, tracées avec une grande facilité de style et avec une propriété singulière d'expressions et de couleurs. Ces mêmes qualités brillent dans la Chasse au Faucon, autre poëme à peu près de même étendue, que nous devons au même biographe. Les préparatifs de cette chasse, les noms des chiens, des éperviers, des faucons, des chasseurs, des piqueurs, la chasse même dont les formes et les incidents sont fidèlement décrits; enfin la querelle comique survenue entre deux chasseurs, dont l'épervier de l'un a pris à la gorge et abattu celui de l'autre, tous ces détails, semés de traits originaux et naïfs, sans avoir le même intérêt pour le fond, n'en prouvent pas moins dans l'auteur le talent poétique le plus souple et le plus heureux.

En résumant ce que nous avons dit des poésies de Laurent de Médicis, nous y verrons une grande souplesse à traiter tous les genres et à prendre tous les tons; dans le sonnet et la *canzone*, un style inférieur à celui de Pétrarque, mais supérieur à celui de tous les autres poètes lyriques qui avaient écrit depuis un siècle entier; dans la poésie philosophique, une clarté qui écarte tous les nuages, une grâce facile qui fait disparaître l'aridité de tous les détails; dans la satire, une touche originale, une création et un modèle; dans des genres plus légers, et si l'on veut plus futiles, une aisance et un naturel qui écartent toute idée de travail. Nous verrons enfin dans Laurent un des principaux restaurateurs de la poésie italienne, qui était restée en silence

* Dans le Recueil de Poésies inédites qu'il a joint à sa Vie de Laurent de Médicis, *Ambra* est la première pièce, et *la Caccia col Falcone* la seconde.

pendant un siècle, comme désespérant de soutenir son premier succès, et découragée par la sublimité même de ses premiers chants.

Il fut bien secondé, dans cette entreprise, par des génies heureux, qui semblèrent éclore à la fois pour donner à la dernière moitié du quinzième siècle un éclat qui manque à la première, et pour préparer, en quelque sorte, les merveilles du siècle suivant.

No. XIV.

INTRODUZIONE DI LORENZO DE' MEDICI

AL SUO COMMENTO

SOPRA ALCUNI DE' SUOI SONETTI.

Assai sono stato dubbioso et sospeso, se dovevo far la presente interpretatione, et commento delli miei sonetti; et se pure qualche volta ero piu inclinato à farlo, le infrascritte ragioni mi occorrevano in contrario, et mi toglievano di tale opera. Prima la presontione nella quale mi pareva incorrere, commentando io le cose proprie, così per la troppa estimatione che mostravo fare di me medesimo, come perchè mi pareva assumere in me quello giudicio, che debba essere d' altri, notando in queste parti l'ingegni di coloro, alle mani de' quali perverranno e miei versi, come poco sufficienti à potergli intendere. Pensavo oltra questo poter' essere da qualcuno facilmente ripreso di poco giudicio, havendo consumato il tempo nel comporre et nel commentare versi, la materia de' quali et subietto in gran parte fusse una amorosa passione; et questa essere molto piu riprensibile in me, per le continue occupationi, et publice, et private, le quali mi dovevano ritrarre da simili pensieri, secondo alcuni, non solamente frivoli, et dì poco momento, ma ancora pernitiosi, et di qualche pregiudicio così all' anima nos-

tra, come all' honore del mondo; et se questo, et il pensare à simili cose è grande errore, il metterle in versi è molto maggiore; ma il commentarle, non pare minor difetto che sia di colui, che ha fatto un lungo et indurato habito nelle male opere; massime perche e commenti sono riservati per cose theologice, o di filosofia, et importanti grandi effetti, o à edificatione, et consolatione della mente nostra, o à utilità dell' humana generatione. Aggiugnesi ancora questo, che forse à qualcuno parrà riprensibile, quando bene la materia et subietto fusse per se assai degno, havendo scritto et fattone mentione in lingua nostra materna, et volgare, la quale, dove si parla et è intesa, per esser molto commune, non pare dechini da qualche viltà, et in quelli luoghi, dove non ne è notitia, non può essere intesa. Et però à questa parte questa opera, et fatica nostra pare al tutto vana, et come non fusse fatta.

Al presente ho pure deliberato, vinto al mio parere da miglior ragione, metterla in opera; pensando che, se questa mia poca fatica sarà di qualche estimatione, et grata à qualcuno, sarà ben collocata et non al tutto vana. Se pure harà poca gratia, sarà poco letta, et da pochi vituperata: et non sendo molto durabile, poco durerà ancora la riprensione, nella qualle possa ricorrere. Et rispondendo al presente alla prima ragione, à quelli che di presontione mi volessino in alcuno modo notare, dico, che à me non pare presontione lo interpretare le cose mie, ma più presto torre fatica ad altri: et di nessuno è più proprio lo interpretare, che di colui medesimo che ha scritto: perche nessuno può meglio sapere o eleggere la verità del petto suo, come mostra assai chiaramente la confusione che nasce dalla varietà de commenti, nelli

quali il più delle volte si segue più tosto la nostra propria, che la intentione vera di chi ha scritto. Ne mi pare per questo fare argomento, che io tenga troppo conto di me medesimo, e tolga ad altri il giudicarmi; perchè credo sia officio vero di ogni huomo operare tutte le cose à beneficio de gli huomini, o proprio, o d' altri: et perchè ogniuno non nasce atto o disposto à potere operare quelle cose, che sono riputate prime nel mondo, è da misurare se medesimo, et vedere in che mistiero meglio si può servire à l'humana generatione, et in quello esercitarsi; perchè alla diversità de gli ingegni humani, et alla necessità della vita nostra, non puo satisfare una cosa sola, ancora che sia la prima, et più eccellente che possino far gli huomini, et per questo si conclude, non solamente molte opere d'ingegno, ma ancora molti vili mistieri concorrere di necessità alla perfettione della vita humana; et essere vero officio di tutti gli huomini in quel grado che si trovano o dal cielo, o dalla natura, o dalla fortuna disposti, servire all' humana generatione. Io harei ben desiderato potermi esercitare in maggior cose; ne voglio però per questo mancare in quello, che sopporta lo ingegno et forze mie, à qualcuno, se non a molti; e quali forse piu tosto per piacere à me, che perche le cose mie satisfaccino à loro, mi hanno confortato à questo; l'auttorità de' quali et gratia vale assai appresso di me. Et se non potrò fare altra utilità à chi leggerà i versi miei, almanco qualche poco di piacere se ne piglierà; perche forse qualche ingegno proportionato, et conforme à loro troveranno; et se pur qualcuno se ne ridesse, à me sara grato che tra gli aversi miei questa voluttà ancora sia picciola, parendomi massimamente, publicando questa interpretatione, sottomettermi più tosto al giudicio de gli altri. Conciosia che, se da me medesimo

havessi giudicato questi miei versi indegni di esser letti, harei fuggito il giudicio de gli altri; ma commentandogli et publicandogli ho fuggito, al mio parere, molto meglio la presontione del giudicarmi da me medesimo.

Hora, per rispondere alle calunnie di quelli che volessino accusarmi, havend'io messo il tempo et nel comporre, et nel commentare cose non degne di fatica o di tempo alcuno, per essere passioni amorose, et massime tra molte mie necessarie occupationi; dico, che veramente con giustitia sarei dannato, quando da natura humana fussi di tanta eccellenza dotato, che tutti gli huomini potessino operare sempre tutte le cose perfette. Ma perchè questo grado di perfettione è stato concesso à molto pochi, et à questi pochi ancor molto rare volte nella vita loro, mi pare si possa concludere, considerata la imperfettione humana, quelle cose essere migliori al mondo, nelle quali in tutto viene minor male, et giudicando più tosto secondo la natura commune et consuetudine universale de gli huomini, pure credo lo amore non solamente non par essere riprensibile, ma quasi necessario, et assai vero argomento di gentilezza et grandezza di animo, et sopra tutto cagione di invitare gli huomini à cose degne et eccellenti, et eccitare et ridurre in atto quelle virtù, che in potenza sono nell' anima nostra. Perchè chi cerca diligentemente qual sia la vera diffinitione dello amore, trova non essere altro, che appetito di bellezza. Et se questo è, tutte le cose deformi et brutte necessariamente dispiácciono à chi ama. Et mettendo per al presente quello amore, il quale, secondo Platone, è mezzo à tutte le cose à trovar la loro perfettione, et riposarsi ultimamente nella suprema bellezza, cioè Iddio, parlando di quello amore, che si estende solamente ad amar la hu-

mana creatura; dico, se questo non è quella perfettione di amore, che si chiama sommo bene, almanco veggiamo chiaramente contenere in se tanti beni, et evitare tanti mali, che secondo la commune consuetudine della vita humana tiene luogo di bene, massime se è ornata di quelle circostanze et conditioni che si convengono à un vero amore, che mi pare sieno due, la prima, che si ami una cosa sola; la seconda che si ami sempre. Queste due conditioni mal possono cadere, se il subietto amato in se, non ha proportione dell' altre cose humane, somma perfettione, et che oltre alle naturali bellezze non concorra nella cosa amata ingegno grande, modi et costumi ornati et honesti, maniera et gesti eleganti, destrezza di accogliere, et dolci parole, amore, costanza, et fede. Et queste cose tutte necessariamente convengono alla perfettione della amore. Perchè ancora ch'el principio di amore nasca da gli occhi, et da bellezza, nondimeno alla conservatione et perseveranza in esso bisogna quell' altre conditioni; perche, o se per infirmità, o per questa o per altra cagione si scolorisse il viso, et mancasse o in tutto o in parte la bellezza, restino tutte quell' altre conditioni non meno grate all' animo et al core che la bellezza à gli occhi. Nè sarebbono ancora queste tali conditioni sufficienti, se ancora in lui che ama non fusse vera cognitione di queste conditioni, che presuppone conditione di giudicio nell' amante; nè potrebbe essere amore della cosa amata verso colui che ama, se questo che ama non meritasse essere amato, presupposto lo infallibile della cosa amata. Et però chi prepone un vero amore, di necessità prepone gratia di perfettione, secondo la commune consuetudine de gli huomini, così nell' amato, come in chi ama; et come adviene di tutte l'altre cose perfette, credo che questo tale amore sia suto al mondo raro: che tanto piu arguisce la eccellenza sua. Chi ama

una cosa sola, et sempre, non può porre amore ad altre cose, et però si priva di tutti gli errori et voluttà, nelle quali communemente incorrono gli huomini; et amando persona atta à cognoscere, et cercando in ogni modo che può di piacerle, bisogna di necessità che in tutte le opere sue cerchi di farsi eccellente fra gli altri, seguitando opere virtuose, per farsi più degno che può di quella cosa che egli stima sopra l'altre dignissima; parendogli che in palese et in occulto, come la forma della cosa amata sempre è presente al core, cosi sia presente à tutte le opere sue; et laudi, o riprenda, secondo la loro convenienza, come vero testimonio et assistente giudice non solo dell' opera, ma de pensieri; et così, parte con la vergogna reprimendo il male, parte con lo stimolo del piacergli eccitando il bene sempre, questi tali, se perfettamente non operano, almanco fanno quello che al mondo è riputato manco male; la qual cosa, rispetto al imperfettione humana, al mondo per bene si elegge. Questo adunque è stato il subietto de' versi miei; et se pure con queste ragioni non risponderò alle obtrettationi et calunnie di chi mi volesse dannare, almanco, come disse il nostro Fiorentino poeta, appresso di quelli che hanno provato che cosa è amore, *spero trovar pietà, non che perdono.* Il giudicio de quali è assai à mia satisfattione; perche s' egli è vero, come dice Guido Bolognese, che amore et gentilezza si convertino, et sieno una cosa medesima, credo che à gli huomini basti, et sia espetibile, le laudi de gli alti et gentili ingegni, et curinsi poco de gli altri; perche è impossibile far cosa al mondo che sia da tutti laudata. Et però chi ha elettione, si sforza acquistar laude appresso di quelli, che ancora loro sono degni di laude, et poco curano le openioni de gli altri. 'A me pare che poco si possa biasimare quello che è naturale; nessuna cosa è piu naturale, che lo ap-

petito di unirsi con la cosa bella; et questo appetito è suto ordinato dalla natura ne gli huomini per la propagatione della generatione humana; cosa molto necessaria alla conservation dell' humana specie. Et à questo lo havere ragione che ci debba movere, non è nobilta di sangue, nè speranza di possessioni, di ricchezza, o altra commodità, ma solamente mossa da una certa conformità et proportione che hanno insieme la cosa amata et lo amante, à fine della propagatione dell' humana spetie; et però sono sommamente da dannare quelli, i quali lo appetito move à le cose, che sono fuori di questo ordine naturale, et vero fine già preposto da noi; et da laudar quelli, che, seguitando questo fine, amano cosa sola diuturnamente, et con somma costanza et fede.

'A me pare che assai copiosamente à tale obietto ne sia risposto; et dato che questo amore, come di sopra habbiam detto, sia bene, non par molto difficile à purgar quella parte, che in me potrebbe essere forse piu riprensibile, per le diverse occupationi publice et private; perche s'egli è bene, il bene non ha bisogno d'altre escusationi; perche non ha colpa; et se pur qualche scrupuloso giudicio non volesse ammettere queste ragioni, al manco conceda questa picciola licenza all' età giovenile e tenera, la quale non pare tanto obligata alla censura et giudicio de gli huomini, et nella quale non par tanto grave errore, massime perchè è piu destinata à declinar dalla via retta per la poca esperienza. Manco si può opponere à quelle cose, che la natura et commune uso de gli altri persuadono, questo dico, in caso che pur fusse stimato errore amare molto, con molta sincerità et fede, una cosa, la quale sforza per la perfettione sua lo amore dello amante; la qual cosa non confesso essere errore;

et se questo è, o per le ragioni dette, o havuto rispetto alla età, nè il comporre, nè il commentare miei versi fatti à questo proposito mi può essere imputato à grave errore. Et dato che fusse vero, che non si convenisse commento à simile materia, per esser piccola et poco importante o à edificatione, o contento della mente nostra; dico che se quèsto è, la fatica di questo commento convenirsi massimamente à me, acciochè altro ingegno di più eccellentia ch' el mio, non habbia à consumarsi, o à mettere tempo in cose si basse; et se pure la materia è alta, et degna, come pare à me, il chiarirla bene et il farla piana et intelligibile à ciascuno, è molto utile; et questo, per quello che ho detto di sopra, nessuno il può fare con piu chiara espressione del vero senso, che io medesimo. Nè io sono stato il primo che ho commentato versi importanti simili amorosi subietti. Perchè Dante lui medesimo commentò alcune delle sue canzoni, et altre versi; et io ho letto di Egidio Romano, et Divo del Garbo, eccellentissimi filosofi, sopra quella sottilissima canzone di Guido Cavalcanti, huomo al tempo suo reputato primo dialettico che fusse al mondo, et in oltre à questi nostri versi vulgari eccellentissimo, come mostrano tutte le altre sue opere, et massime la sopradetta canzone, che commincia, *nasce ne cuori gentili Amore*, et gli effetti suoi. Et se pure alla purgatione mia non sono sufficienti nè le soprascritte ragioni, nè gli essempi, la compassione almeno mi doverà giustificare, perchè nella mia gioventù, sendo stato molto perseguitato da gli huomini et dalla fortuna, qualche poco di refrigerio non mi debba essere dinegato; il quale solamente ho trovato in amare ferventemente, et nella compositione et commento de miei versi; come piu chiaramente faremo intendere quando verremo alla espositione di quel sonetto, *Se tra gli altri sospir ch'escon di fore.* Qual son sute le

mie maligne persecutioni, per essere assai publice, et assai note; qual sia stata la dolcezza, et refrigerio, ch' el mio dolcissimo et constantissimo amore ha dato à queste, è impossibile che altri, che io, lo potessi intendere; perchè quando bene l' havessi à qualcuno narrate, cosi era impossibile à lui lo intenderle, come à me riferirne il vero: et però torno al sopradetto verso del nostro Fiorentino poeta, che, dove sia chi per prova intenda amore, così questo amore, che io ho tanto laudato, come qualche particolare amore et carità verso di me, *Spero trovar pietà, non che perdono.*

Resta adunque solamente rispondere alla obiettione, che potessi essere fatta, havendo scritto in lingua volgare, secondo il giudicio di qualcuno non capace o degna di alcuna eccellente materia o subietto; et à questa parte si risponde, alcuna cosa non essere manco degna, per essere più communc; anzi si prova, ogni bene esser tanto migliore, quanto è più communicabile et universale, come è di natura sua quello che si chiama sommo bene; perche non sarebbe sommo, se non fusse infinito: nè alcuna cosa si può chiamare infinita, se non quella che è commune à tutte le cose. Et però non pare, che lo essere commune à tutta Italia la nostra lingua, le tolga dignità, ma è da pensare * fatta la perfettione, o imperfettione di detta lingua. Et considerando, qual sieno quelle conditioni, che danno dignità et perfettione à qualunche idioma o lingua, à me pare, che sieno quattro; delle quali una, o al più due, sieno proprie, o vero laudi della lingua, l'altre più tosto dipendino o dalla consuetudine et opinione de gli huomini, o dalla fortuna. Quella che è vera laude della lingua, è lo essere copiosa, et abondante, et atta ad esprimere bene il senso et il concetto della mente; et però si giudica la lingua Greca

più perfetta della Latina, et la Latina più che la Ebrea; perche l'una più che l'altra meglio esprime la mente di chi ha o detto o scritto alcuna cosa. L'altra conditione, che più significa la perfettione di una lingua, è la dolcezza, l' harmonia, che risulta più d' una che d' un' altra; et benchè l' harmonia sia cosa naturale, et proportionata con l' harmonia dell' anima et del corpo nostro, niente dimeno à me pare, per la varietà de gli ingegni humani, che tutti non sono ben proportionati et perfetti, questa sia più presto opinione, che ragione. Conciosiacosa che quelle, che si giudicano secondo che communemente piacciono et non piacciono, paiono più presto fondate nell' opinione, che nella vera ragione, massime quelle, il dispiacere et piacere delle quali non si prova con altre ragioni che con l' appetito, et non ostanti queste ragioni non voglio però affermare questa non potère essere propria laude della lingua: perche essendo l' harmonia, com' è detto, proportionata alla natura humana; si può inferire, il giudicio della dolcezza di tale harmonia convenirsi à quelli, che in tutto sono ben proportionati à riceverla; il giudicio de quali debbe essere accettato per buono, ancora che fussin pochi; perchè le sentenze, et giudicii de gli huomini più presto si debbono ponderare che numerare. L' altre conditioni, che fan più eccellente una lingua, è, quando in una lingua sono scritti sottili et gravi, et necessarii alla vita humana, così alla mente nostra, come alla utilità de gli huomini, et salute del corpo; come si può dire nella lingua Ebrea per gli ammirabili misteri che contiene, accommodati anzi necessarii all' infallibile verità della fede nostra; et similmente della lingua Greca, continente molte scienze metafisice, naturali, et morali, molto utili all' humana generatione; et quando questo adiviene, è necessario confessare che più presto sia degno il subietto che la lingua; perchè il

subietto è fine, et la lingua è mezzo. Nè però si può chiamare quella lingua più perfetta in se, ma più tosto maggiore perfettione della materia che per essa si tratta; perche chi ha scritto cose theologice, metafisice, naturali, et morali, in quella parte che degnifica la lingua nella quale ha scritto, pare che più presto riservi la laude nella materia, et che la lingua habbi fatto l'officio di strumento; il quale è buono o reo secondo il fine.

Resta un' altra sola conditione, che dà riputatione alla lingua; et questa si è, quando il successo delle cose del mondo è tale, che facci universale, et quasi commune à tutto il mondo quello, che è naturalmente proprio o d'una città, o di una provincia sola; et questo si può più presto chiamar felicità et prosperità di fortuna, che vera laude della lingua; perche l' essere in prezzo, et assai celebrata una lingua nel mondo, consiste nell' opinione di quelli tali, che assai la prezzano et stimano, ne si può chiamare vero o proprio bene quello, che dipende da altri, che da se medesimo; perche quelli tali che l' hanno in prezzo, potrebbono facilmente sprezzarla, et mutare openione, et quelle conditioni mutarsi; quali, mancando la cagione, facilmente mancarebbe ancora la dignità di essere prezzata, questo successo prospero di fortuna è molto appropriato alla lingua Latina, perche la propagatione dell' imperio Romano non è fatta non solamente commune per tutto il mondo, ma quasi necessaria. Et per questo concluderemo, che queste laudi estreme, et che dipendono dalla opinione de gli altri, o dalla fortuna, non siano laudi proprie; et però volendo provar la degnità della lingua nostra, et esprimere qualunche concetto della nostra mente, à questo nessuna miglior ragione si può introducere che la èsperienza. Dante, il Petrarca, il Boccaccio, nostri poeti fiorentini, hanno ne' gravi, et dolcissimi versi et orationi loro, mostro assai chiaramente con molta faci-

lità potersi in questa lingua esprimere ogni senso; perchè chi legge la comedia di Dante, vi troverà molte cose theologice et naturali essere con gran destrezza et facilità espresse; troverà ancora molto attamente nel scrivere suo quelle tre generationi di stili, che sono da gli oratori laudati, cioè humile, mediocre, et alto, et in effetto in uno solo Dante assai perfettamente assoluto quello, che in diversi auttori così Greci come Latini si troverà. Chi negherà nel Petrarca trovarsi uno stile grave, lepido, et dolce, et queste cose amorose con tanta gravità, et venustà trattate, quante senza dubbio non si trova in Ovidio, in Tibullo, in Catullo, in Propertio, o in alcun' altro Latino? Le canzone di Dante et i sonetti sono di tanta gravità, sottilità, et ornamento, che quasi non hanno comparatione. In prosa, et oratione soluta, chi ha letto il Boccaccio, huomo dottissimo et facondissimo, facilmente giudicherà singolare, et sola al mondo, non solamente la inventione, ma la copia et la eloquenza sua; et considerando le opere sue del Decamerone per la diversità della materia, hora grave, hora mediocre, hora bassa, et continenti tutte le perturbationi che à gli huomini possono accadere, d' amore, d'odio, timore, et speranza, tante nove astutie et ingegni, et havendo ad esprimere tutte le nature et passioni de gli huomini che si trovano al mondo; senza controversia giudicherà nessuna lingua meglio essere atta ad esprimere, che la nostra. Et Guido Cavalcanti, di chi sopra facemmo mentione, non si può dire quanto commodamente habbi insieme congiunto la gravità, et la dolcezza; come mostra la canzona sopradetta, et alcuni sonetti et ballate sue dolcissime. Restano ancora molti altri gravi, et eleganti scrittori la mentione de' quali lascieremo, piu tosto per fuggire prolissità, che perche non siano degni; et però concluderemo più tosto essere mancati alla lingua gli huomini, et la essercitatione, che la lingua à gli huomini, et alla materia;

la dolcezza et harmonia della quale, à chi, per essersi assuefatta con essa, ha con lei qualche consuetudine, veramente è grandissima, et atta molto al movere. Queste, che sono, et che forse à qualcuno potrebbono pur parere proprie laudi della lingua, mi paiono assai copiosamente nella nostra; et per quello, che insino adhora, massime di Dante, è suto trattato nell' opera sua, mi pare non solamente utile, et necessario, per i gravi et importanti affetti, che i versi suoi sieno letti, come mostra lo essempio per molti commenti fatti sopra la sua Comedia, da huomini dottissimi et famosissimi, et le frequenti allegationi che da santi et scienti huomini ogni dì si sentono nelle loro publice predicationi; et forse saranno ancora scritte in questa lingua cose sottili, et importanti, et degne di essere lette, massime perchè insino adhora si può dire la adolescenza di questa lingua; perchè ogn'hora si fa più elegante, et gentile; et potrebbe facilmente nella gioventù, et adulta età sua, venire ancora in maggiore perfettione; et tanto più, aggiungendosi qualche prospero successo et augumento al Fiorentino imperio, come si debbe non solamente sperare, ma con tutto l'ingegno et forze per i buoni cittadini aiutare. Pure questo, per essere in podestà della fortuna, et nella volontà dello ineffabile giudicio di Dio, come non è bene affermarlo, non è ancora da disperarsene. Basta per al presente far questa conclusione, che di quelle laudi che sono proprie della lingua, la nostra ne è assai copiosa, nè giustamente ce ne possiamo dolere: et per queste medesime ragioni nessuno mi può riprendere, se io ho scritto in quella lingua, nella quale io sono nato et nodrito; massime perchè et la Ebrea, et la Latina erano nel tempo loro tutte materne et naturali, ma parlate o scritte piu accuratamente, et con qualche regola et ragione, da quelli che messi furono in honore et in prezzo generalmente dal volgo et turba populare.

Pare che con assai sufficienti ragioni si sia provato, la lingua nostra non essere inferiore ad alcuna dell' altre; et però havendo in genere dimostro la perfettione di esse, giudico molto conveniente ristrignersi al particolare, et venire dalla generalità à qualche proprietà, quasi come dalla circonferenza al centro. Et però, sendo mio proposito, la interpretatione delli miei sonetti, mi sforza mostrare tra li altri modi delli stili volgari, et consueti per chi ha scrittori in questa lingua, lo stile del sonetto non essere inferiore o al ternario o alla canzona, o ad altra generatione de stili volgari, arguendo dalla difficultà; perche la virtù, secondo i filosofi, consiste circa il difficile; et è sentenza di Platone, ch'el narrar brevemente et dilucidamente molte cose, non solo pare mirabile tra gli huomini, ma quasi cosa divina. La brevità del sonetto non comporta che una sola parola sia vana, et il vero subietto et materia del sonetto debbe essere qualche acuta et gentile sentenza, narrata attamente, et in pochi versi ristretta, et fuggendo la oscurità et durezza. Ha gran similitudine, et conformità questo modo di stile con lo epigramma, quanto allo acume della materia, et alla destrezza dello stile; ma è degno et capace il sonetto di sentenze più gravi; et però diventa tanto più difficile. Confesso il ternario essere più alto et grande stile, et quasi simile allo heroico; nè per questo però piu difficile; perchè ha il campo più largo; et quella sentenza, che non si puo in dua o in tre versi esprimere, l' animo di chi scrive, nel ternario si puo ampliare. Le canzone mi pare e' habbino gran similitudine con la Elegia; ma credo, o per natura dello stile nostro, o per la consuetudine di chi ha scritto insino à qui canzone, lo stile della canzone non senza qualche poco di pudore ammetterebbe molte cose non solamente leggieri et vane, ma troppo molli, et lascive, le quali communemente si tro-

vano scritte nelle Latine elegie. Le canzoni ancora, per haver piu larghi spatii dove possin vagare, non reputo tanto difficile stile, quanto quello del sonetto; et questo si può assai facilmente provocar con la esperienza; perchè chi ha composto sonetti, et si è ristretto à qualche certa et sottile materia, con gran difficultà ha fuggito la oscurità et durezza dello stile; et è gran differenza da compor sonetti in modo che le rime sforzino la materia, à quello, che la materia sforzi le rime; et mi pare, che ne' versi Latini sia molto maggiore libertà, che ne' volgari; perche nella lingua nostra, oltra à gli piedi, che più tosto per natura che per altra regola è necessario servare ne' versi, concorre ancora questa difficultà delle rime, le quali, come sa chi ha provato, disturbano molte et belle sentenze, ne permettono si possino narrare con tanta facilità et chiarezza; et che il nostro verso habbia e suoi piedi, si prova perche si potrebbono far molti versi contenenti undici sillabe, senza haver suono di versi, o alcuna altra differenza dalla prosa. Concludiamo per questo, il verso volgare esser molto difficile, e tra gli altri versi lo stile del sonetto difficillimo; et per questo è degno di essere in prezzo, quanto alcuno de gli altri stili volgari. Nè per questo voglio inferire, i miei sonetti essere di quella perfettione che io ho detto convenirsi à tal modo di stile, si come dice Ovidio di Platone. Per al presente mi basta haver tentato quello stile, che appresso i volgari è piu eccellente; et se non ho potuto aggiungere alla perfettion sua, o conducere questo carro solare, almanco mi sia in luogo di laude, lo ardire di haver tentato questa via; ancora che per qualche mio mancamento le forze mi sieno mancate à tanta impresa.

No. XV.

MAGNIFICO VIRO MAJORI MEO

JOHANNI DE LANFREDINIS,

ORATORI FLORENTINO, ROMÆ.

Circa le coze d'Oximo, dubito non fare Maestro Piero Fantini, et non ci havere oltra questo, qualche incarico. Qui non arriva anchora segno alcuno di danno, et Bocholino ogni dì mi sollecita al pagamento, et credo lunedì mi bisognera pagarli 1500 ducati. Non so donde voi vi caviate, che qui siano suti mandati e 5000 ducati; maxime perchè la lettera che mi avete mandato di Cosenza mostra l'opposito. Intendo oltra questo, quanto mi scrivate della morte del Nipote, delle quale mi pare ricevere vergogna assai; perchè è cosa molto dura à credere, che essendo vivo quando si feciono i capîtoli, sia morto di sua morte in si breve tempo. Bisogna usiate la diligentia vostra in saperne il vero, et mandarmitale examina et chiarezza che io non sia vituperato; et essendo pure vivo, il Legato et M. Jo. Jacopo promessono che sarebbe libero fra brevissimo tempo. Credo la natura di nostro Signore non sia nè maligna, nè scandalosa; et quando fussi, che non ne vidi mai segno, non doverebbe essere meco. Fate dichiarare bene tucte queste cose; che io stimero più ogni minima nota della

fede mia che la vita, o se è cosa più cara nel mondo; et crediatelo, et così fate intendere ove bisogna; che quando non s' avessi riguardo all' onore mio, mostrerò che mi dispiaccia; ma non lo posso credere, avederomene all' experientia. Non so se Bocholino farà pensiero di fermarsi quì, et compararci qualche cosa; che lo fáremo habile quando voglia, a poterlo fare. Così li è suto offerto una provisione, benchè per ancora non la accepti. Doveva essere tornata Cosenza, et doverete dare modo, et alla indennità mia, et alla conservazione dello honore.

Perchè in questo dispone di Bocholino ho affaticato di quelli che non sono di mio mistiere, bisogna che La Santita di Nostro Signore me aiuti a remunerargli che sono de' suoi, et questo è il suo Frate, Maestro Matheo da Tolentino, che è ito tante volte di giù in sù, benchè da me provisto pure con pericolo et disagio; al quale vorrei che la Santita di N. S. concedessi una reservatione et dispensa *gratis*, come per una notula vederete in questa; et meglio se meglio pare a Sua Beatitudine; che in vero ha servito bene et enne suto liberale à famiglia di Statta.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

Florentiæ, 18 *Aug.* 1487.

No. XVI.

LAURENTII MEDICIS VITA,

AUCTORE ANGELO FABRONIO.

(*Vol.* i. *p.* 185, *&c.*)

"ERANT tum Italicorum Principum multi, qui sine injuria potentiam levem atque inopem esse arbitrabantur; itaque minas jactando, aut pericula intendendo, aut formidines opponendo beneficia non obtinebant, sed extorquebant. Inter hos eminebant Calabriæ Dux, in quo nihil fuit unquam moderatum et pudens, et Ludovicus Sfortia homo ferus atque impotenti ambitione. Sed Laurentius molliendos animos, vel contrarias voluntates sibi conciliandas, opportunitate idoneorum ad agendum temporum utendum, adhibendam dexteritatem atque prudentiam censebat, quod utrum ei gloriosius an laboriosius fuerit difficile est judicare. Tanta enim illis temporibus erat discordia Italorum Principum, ut necesse videretur inclinatione voluntatis in aliquem, odium in se multorum hominum gravesque offensiones concitare. Quapropter non vereor ne videar assentari Laurentio, si affirmavero singularem et pene divinam in hac rerum difficultate illius prudentiam fuisse. Cum haberet certas vias atque rationes, quibus dissidentium Principum conatus investigare et consequi posset, ita res ab illo agebantur, ut

in eorum consiliis omnibus non modo aures, sed etiam oculi Laurentii interesse viderentur. Dolebat vero ac vehementer angebatur, cum videret Pontificem infensum atque inimicum adeo Neapolitanorum Regi, ut vocare in judicium, et a sacris removere illum ob non soluta Sedi Apostolicæ tributa, hujusque jura violata consilium ceperit. Multa erant vincula, quibus cum utroque Laurentius conjungebatur, quapropter omnia circumspicienda sibi esse putavit, ne quid admitteret, quod quemquam jure posset offendere. Quod Pontifex in conciliandis nuptiis Francisco Cibo anteposuerit Laurentii filiam vel ipsius Neapolitani Regis filiæ, et Galeatii Sfortiæ sorori, et nova semper atque insignia daret indicia suæ erga illum benevolentiæ, ut nihil negare posse videretur, ipso rogante Laurentio, suspicionem multis injiciebat se de illius sententia omnia capere consilia. Sed monebat eum Laurentius, ne inops viribus et pecunia, ullo se implicaret bello; ut prudentiæ ac mansuetudinis, minime vero excommunicationis armis jura tueretur atque defenderet; ne nimium tribueret externorum Principum promissis, quorum arma nisi ab Italia averterentur, actum fore de ejus salute; caveret a Venetis, neque verba ab iis sibi dari facile pateretur, quod iis mos semper fuerit serere discordias, quo facilius in aliorum fortunas invaderent. Non minus studiose atque amice Laurentius agebat cum Ferdinando Rege de reconciliatione concordiæ; quodque non solum Veneti ipsi, sed et Ludovicus Sfortia vehementer optabant, ne se in istam pacificationem interponeret, ita munus Reipublicæ gratia susceptum explebat, ut nullam ex suis factis ipsi offensionem exciperent. Multæ sane erant caussæ, quare in Neapolitano regno minime quietæ res essent; et quamvis sumptum supplicium fuisset de iis, quos conjurationis principes fuisse constabat, supererant

tamen, qui omnes machinas adhibebant, ut vindicarent se se ab Ferdinandi et Alfonsi Calabriæ Ducis impotenti dominatione atque avaritia. Non horum modo, sed etiam Pontificis iram inflammabant quod Rex pactis in jungenda pace legibus stare nollet, seque insolenter jactaret, omnia potentiæ suæ facile cessura. Contra hæc Pontifex aiebat, nisi publice sibi satisfactum fuisset, multas se ulciscendæ injuriæ habere vias, et audacius loquebatur, quod arcæ, amicitiæ atque affinitati Laurentii plurimum tribuebat. Hic quidem experiebatur et tentabat omnia, quibus molliret iratum Pontificis animum, neque desistebat ipsum a consilio revocare quærendi externa auxilia, atque arma iterum capiendi, proponebatque non solum mala præsentia, sed etiam futura, quæ cavere et dignitati et existimationi illius maxime utile arbitrabatur. Eodem tempore, quo Italiam novi belli periculo liberare cupiebat, secreto docebat Pontificem, qua ratione Regis audaciæ resistere, suaque jura tueri posset. Multæ extant litteræ, quæ sunt monumenta insignia non solum rerum gestarum, sed etiam prudentiæ, dexteritatis, et si vis etiam calliditatis, qua ceteros vincebat Laurentius. Ex his quoque cognosces, quantum esset illius auctoritatis pondus, quantum salutis suæ interesse putaret Ferdinandus Rex, si cum Laurentio et Florentinis studio et amicitia conjunctus esset, et quantum Laurentio ipsi elaborandum fuerit, ut nullum tum intercederet bellum, inter quos maxima potentiæ esset æmulatio. Qua in re non solum tranquillitati serviebat, sed etiam dignitati utilitatique, cum ipse solus rerum publicarum fortunam moderari videretur, et familiæ commoda augeret. Quod vehementer cupiebat, ut Joannes filius honoribus amplissimis fortunisque maximis frueretur, obtinuit a Mediolanensium Duce et Neapolitanorum Rege eo tem-

pore, quo eorum singuli occulte invicem inimici materiem suspicionibus quærebant (nam Laurentium non tam sibi conciliare volebant, quam a ceteris omnibus alienare) ut is ditissimis, quæ in eorum erant ditione, augeretur sacerdotiis, quorum alterum Miramundi, alterum Montis Cassini Abbatia appellantur. Eodem tempore in hac summa gratia ac potentia impetravit Julio fratris filio Capuæ, ut vocant, Prioratum, qui erat proprius Rhodianorum equitum, opesque atque honores aliis aut sanguine, aut amicitia, aut civitatis jure conjunctis conciliavit. Nihil vero tam gloriosum erat Laurentio, quam dum suorum utilitati consulebat, multorum quoque desideria se posse explere. Postulant ab eo Pannoniæ Rex ut filio, Sabaudiæ Dux ut patruo, Veneti ac Ludovicus Sfortia ut Mantuanorum Episcopo dibaphum à Pontifice impetret, nec recusavit eorum precibus satisfacere, quamvis de augenda dignitate Joannis filii maxima eum tum cura attingeret. Britanniæ et Hispaniæ Reges, qui Romæ gravissima negotia habebant, hæc ejus fidei commendant; et vel ipse Fridericus Cæsar, scriptis ad eum litteris mense Sext. an. MCCCCLXXXIX. suos Legatos, quos Romam mittebat, ejus auctoritati commendatos voluit, illud addens, *se non ignorare quanti usus et commodi multis esset ejus opera in omni re Italica administranda.* Joannes II. Lusitanorum Rex, ob multas et singulares virtutes cognomento Magnus, plurimarum rerum commercium cum Laurentio habebat, ejus opera libentissime utebatur, et in hoc sibi vehementer gratulari videbatur, quod, eodem hortante, res gestas suas historiæ monumentis mandandas Politianus susceperat. Fuit etiam adjutor Laurentius multis in petitionibus Bonifacii Montis Ferrati Marchionis: texit sua benevolentia, præsidio custodiaque salutem ac dignitatem Macedoniæ, ut vocabant, Principissæ, quam apud se æstate an. MCCCCLXXXIX.

hospitio cum excepisset, ita Pontificis amori fideique commendavit, perinde ac si socius ejus calamitatum fuisset. Vel ipsam Riarii Comitis conjugem Catharinam Sfortiam nulla deseruit in re, ut ex memoria, quas sibi vir ejus sæpe fecerat, insidias plene deposuisse judicaretur. Sed verebatur, ne, quia in se multorum negotia suscipiebat, exæquare videretur ambitione quadam commendationes suas: cum vero videret propter egregiam et singularem fidei opinionem multos et magnos Principes suo honori esse fautores, capiebat animo non mediocrem voluptatem, quod ejus officia multis saluti atque honori essent, et nominis quoque sui immortalitati suffragarentur. Erant Romæ malevoli (hi enim nunquam summis viris defuerunt) qui affirmarent merita Laurentii erga Pontificem minora esse quam ab illo prædicarentur; et mortuo sub finem an. MCDXC. Florentinorum oratore Joanne Lanfredinio, cujus integerrimam vitam, modestissimos mores, summam fidem, prudentiam, innocentiam maxime diligebat Pontifex, tanti ponderis, sicuti antea, apud illum non fore Laurentii commendationes. Quæ oratio cum ad aures ipsius Pontificis pervenisset, contumeliosa ab eo habita est, seque ita confidere de virtute Laurentii, eique uni tantum tribuere ostendit, ut istud potius judicium quam studium esset existimandum.

No. XVII.

MAGNIFICO VIRO MAJORI MEO

JOHANNI DE. LANFREDINIS,

ORATORI FLORENTINO ROMÆ.

Io ho inteso per lettere degli octo de' dì 15, come è passata questa cosa de' Cenci, e non biasmo punto i modi che ci avete tenute, anzi gli appruovo, ne credo possino havere dato molestia al papa; et pure debbono essere grati al Re. Vederemo hora quello ne seguira. Credo che se el Re giudicherà bene, non possa tenersi mal contento delle opere nostre in questa cosa, perchè non so che mancho poteva fare il Papa, che reservarci semplicimente le ragione sue; et però, se il Re misura bene quello ch' io sono a Nostro Signore, quando bene ne sapessi el tutto, non debbe tenersi mal contento o del Sig. Virginio, o di me; anzi doverebbe restarci obbligato, se 'l Papa resterà contento ad non procedere più oltre, havendo tanta ragione, ed essendoli questa cosa tanto ad cuore; perchè el vero è pure questo, che noi habbiamo havuto a reprimere el Papa et non a pignerlo, perchè credo el Re, et molti altri sappino quello che satisfarebbe al Papa. Io crederrei fussi bene, che il Sig. Virginio

usassi giustificazioni di questa natura, et parlando io a questi dì quì con M. Marino, che mi confortava ad adjutare el Re in questa cosa de censi, li dixi che mi pareva La Maestà sua dovessi ben pensare, che quel credito che io ho col Papa, io non me lo perdessi sanza profitto di sua Maestà, alla quale era nota la passione che aveva il Papa in questa cosa, et che io desiderrei havere tanta auctorità con sua Santità che potessi levarli tucti; ma parendomi cosa impossibile, non mi pareva fare poco, procurando con ogni mio diligentia che 'l Papa si sfogassi, condolersi et giustificarsi, lasciando per hora la executione de interdetto, o d'altro, et che io ero ben contento, con tucto lo ingegno et forze mie affaticharmi, che questa tale executione non venissi ad effecto; perchè questo potevo fare con qualche giustificatione, havendo sempre confortato il Papa ad volere vivere in pace, et havevo speranza che lo dovessi fare. Parvemi che di questo mio parlare restassi assai satisfacto, et lo giudicassi ragionevole et vero. Io ve ne adviso, perche possiate conferire tucto col Sig. Virginio, se è costì; se non, fategliene intendere, acciòchè possa in sua et mia giustificatione aiutarsene.

* * * *

Circa la condocta del servita di Milano, la malattia del Sig. Lodovico non ha lasciata fare experientia di molte buone parole che ha usato. Io ne scrivo di nuovo a Milano, per vedere se ne vi cavi construtto, nè mi pare sia necessaria per questo la venuta del Sig. Paolo; et circa la condocta appruovo la opinione del Sig. Virginio, che 'l Papa non vi intervengha, et quando Ser Santi ne scripse li dissi che mi pareva cosa impossibile. Vuolse sollicitare che si cavi constructo da Milano, et delibe-

rare poi su quello, et qualche modo buono non ci debbe manchare.

* * * *

Dì nuovo judico che a me non piace Venitiani tenghino questi modi col papa, forse per questo ropto et caso del Sig. Roberti (*Malatesta*) si lasceranno meglio intendere. Parmi nostra Signore non debba resistere d'intendere l' animo loro. Del Sig. Roberto non si sa se è vivo o morto; quando fussi morto, credo dureremo fatica a tenere el Conte di Pitigliano, et bisogna che ci si pensi. Intenderei volontieri el parere del Sig. Virginio.

* * *

Pagolo Rucellai vi richiederà uno Breve. Priegovi lo serviate, perchè serve a proposito di Cosimo Rucellai mio nipote.

Ricordovi la expeditione di Passignano. Raccomandovi l' articolo di Nicholini. Harete una lettera a nostra Signore in suo favore. Similmente sollecitate le expeditioni di Cristofano Spini et di Tomaso Portinari.

Questo fante ha ad essere costì Martedì mattina di buon hora.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

Florentiæ, die XVIII. *Aug.*
hora III. (1487.)

MAGNIFICO VIRO MAJORI MEO

JOHANNI DE LANFREDINIS,

ORATORI FLORENTINO ROMÆ.

QUESTA mattina ho ricevuto le vostre del di 17. alle quale, et a quelle de' dì 8. et 12. risponderò pel presente Cavallaro, etc.

Hoggi ha parlato meco M. Jacopo da Volterra, et referitomi in nome di Nostro Signore quasi lo effecto che scrivete voi, et mi pare il ricordo mio non sia suto ingrato a Sua Santitia, che ne ho gran piacere, et ricordandomi io delli effecti di decto ricordo, non mi pare vi sia cosa, che mi possa dare carico; ne posso credere N. S. io habbi usato, o habbi ad usare con mio carico. Io mi confermo ogni hora più in quella opinione, che non si debba procedere più innanzi, nè con citatione, nè con fulminare le censure, perchè questo si tira drieto l' arme, o gran vilipendio di S. Chiesa, et mi pare dobbiate advertire N. S. ad considerare molto bene chi lo consiglia in questa cosa, che dubito non lo faccia a suo proposito, et per mettere S. S. in necessità et angustie, et poterlo poi meglio maneggiare, perchè in quelli casi, non solamente gli huomini di grande auctorità, ma e Cappellani et ragazi acquistano auctorità. Gl' exempli della guerra passata sono si freschi, che non bisogna ricordargli. Oltra questo in Italia sono molti, che vogliono male al Rè, anzi quasi non ha gratia con alcuno, et credo molto desidererebbono satisfare alla passione loro contra el Rè, a spese et pericolo di N. S. sanza omettere del loro altro che parole, o pochissimi effecti; sicchè è molto neces-

sario, che la S. S. advertisca a tucte queste cose, et guardi al bisogno suo più tosto, che alle opinioni d' altri.

Et come per altra vi dissi, io desidero, se N. S. ha voluntà di comporre col Rè, haverne qualche grado, et a questo effecto me accade scrivervi, che egl' è venuto quì Angelo Serragli mandato dal Re et Duca di Calabria, perchè io mi intrometta con N. S. Io non gli ho risposto, nè sì, ne nò; ma rimessolo alla tornata mia a Firenze, perchè possiate fare intendere alla S. S. questa cosa per governarmene, come parrà a quella, per non errare. Crede Angelo predetto, che l' Rè si lascerebbe andare a qualche somma di danari, cioè permettendo, che N. S. ponessi al Clero del Reame quella quantità che restassino d' accordo, et così darebbe qualche stato al S. Francesco, *(Cibò)* o quello del Prefecto, o altro equivalente; benchè, parla di questo, come da se, et solamente in nome del Rè, et Duca mostra mantenere una buona dispositione a questo accordo, et uno gran desiderio, che io me ne affatichi. Altro per hora non ho potuto ritrarre, et questo desidero molto, che sia secretissimo appresso N. S. et dè intendere, il più presto, che si può, quello che hò a rispondere ad Angelo. Voi proporrete questa cosa a N. S. sanza dirgliene mia opinione, perchè vorrei intenderlo naturalmente, et quando fussi disposto allo accordo, à me piacerà; quando fussi in altra opinione, similmente approverò ogni partito, da guerra in fuora, o cosa che di necessità ve lo induca. Ingegnatevi di cavarne constructo, et advisatemi presto.

Circa lo andare dì M. Ascanio a Milano, essendoci suto adviso, più dì sono, del miglioramento del S. Lodovico, ne ci essendò dipoi altro in contrario, non credo perseveri nella dispositione di partire, o fare segno alcuno

di desiderare l' andare là, et quando anchora el S. Lodovico aggravassi, io hò decto largamente con questo suo, che manda verso Milano, che mi parrebbe S. S. dovessi aspectare d' esser richiesta al governo, el quale di necessità doverrà capitare nelle mani sue, perchè non c'è a chi prima et più appartengha; et in questo caso è molto più ad reputatione sua essere richiesto, che andare da se; tucta volta, rimettendomo però al judicio di S. S. Queste medesime ragioni potete usare voi seco, quando ritornassi pure a questi ragionamenti, mostrando, che io habbi particulare fede, et speranza in quella, et che non potrei più desiderare in quello caso, che la S. S. fussi là, nè eleggere huomo più a proposito della Città nostra, o mio. Conferite prima a N. S. et non parendo altro a S. S. exequite questo.

Io desidero essere purghato almancho appresso el Vescovo di Tortona della presumptione, della quale me imputò M. Ascanio col prefato Vescovo, et con M. Gian Jacopo, che io havessi promesso le gente per Oximo a N. S. prima che da Milano ne fussi scripto; laqual cosa non è punto vera, com voi sapete, et molti altri, maxime a Milano, affirmando questa non essere mia natura, et Stefano Taverna ne può fare testimonio; desiderrei el prefato Vescovo, in qualche modo destro, mi scusassi, et col Cardinale, et con M. Gian Jacopo, perchè ho' molto in odio ogni presumptuoso, et vorrei fuggire questo carico appresso di loro, et d' ogni altro. Ringratiate M. Ascanio della opera sua in queste cose di Miramondo, et in effecto satisfate alli convenevoli dove bisognino, et advisatemi, se di quà hò a fare alcuna cosa.

Quando N. S. sarà risoluto, come vuole vivere col Rè, si potrà pensare al rassettare le cose sue, et delle gente,

et delle altre spese; et io perquel poco di notitia che hò, non mancherò di fare intendere a N. S. tucto quello, che intenderò io; ma non si possono fare queste cose, se non piglia forma questo dibattito tra l' Papa, et Rè, per essere gran differentia dal uno modo all' alto, che N. S. ne vorrà pigliare.

Allo Spedalecto, die XVIIII. Septembris, 1487, hora II. Noctis. Et el Cavallaro sarà costì per tucto Sabato.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

MAGNIFICO VIRO MAJORI MEO

JOHANNI DE LANFREDINIS,

ORATORI FLORENTINO ROME.

Io ho ricevuto le vostre de' dì 23 et 25, et anchora che tucte contenghino cose molto aliene da propositi nostri passati, pure sono come sogliono essere le cose di costà, delle quali comincio a non havere molta fede, et credo sia bene da quì inanzi non pigliare più carico, che si bisogni, et più tosto secondare la mente del Papa, che atraversarla, perchè in fine lui farà a suo modo, et il carico che si piglia con altri, tornerebbe sopra me maxime; perchè vegho le cose sue si conducono con tali, et tanti, che non si tenghono secrete; et però, cominciando alla parte di quello che s'avessi a fare col Rè, mi pare facciate intendere à Nostro Signore che io potrei havere presso errore nello havere parlato troppo largo et presumptuosamente, et che mi pare da qui inanzi da dovere solamente inten-

dere la intentione di S. Santita, et accomodarsi ad epsa, la quale può meglio giudicare delle cose sue, che alcuno altro, mostrando, che quando li paia doversi accordare col Rè, a me sarà cosa molto grata, et mi leverà da pericolo et noia, et potrò poi molto facilmente conservarmi l'uno et l'altro; et se insino a hora, io sono suto d'opinione che sia da procedere gravemente et adagio, ne è suto cagione, perchè la S. sua mi pareva ferma opinione di procedere contro al Rè, non solo colle censure, ma colle arme, come mostra la instructione, che decte a M. Jacopo da Volterra; et però m' è paruto di andare molto adagio ad confortarlo ad accordarsi col Rè, per essere cosa molto aliena da questo altro proposito, dubitando, che S. S. non havessi anchora a dolersi di me, quando la havessi confortata allo accordo, havendo cosi largamente scoperto l' animo suo in contrario; perchè non è mio offitio fare altro, che secundare quello, che manifestamente appare essere sua intentione, reiterando quello che altre volte ho decto che havei caro, quando fussi pure inclinato allo accordo, haverne qualche grado, havendo fin quì havuto tanto carico; et se il S. Francesco aspecta bene alchuno di questo accordo, io non sono per torgliene, ma più tosto per aiutarnelo; perchè dopo N. S. non ha persona che più desideri el bene suo, che io. In effecto ad me pare da pigliare pochi carichi, come ho decto, et de accomodarsi.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

Florentiæ,
die XXVIII. *Octobris,* 1487.

MAGNIFICO VIRO MAJORI MEO

JOHANNI DE LANFREDINIS,

ORATORI FLORENTINO ROMÆ.

Per l'ultima vostra de di xviiii. intendo eravate pure state con Nostro Signore a lungo, et potuto ragionare seco di più cose, etc.

Da Milano ho lettere da Piero Alamanni, che sono le prime di qualche substantia, per quanto infino a hora ritrae, mi pare trovare il Signore Lodovico molto disposto all' amicitia nostra, et bene acconcio verso Nostro Signore, mostrando desiderare molto che si saldino questi conti vecchi, et si mettino da parte et faccisi una ragione nuova, che sia tucta amore et fede, mostrando desiderio di satisfare intucto quello che può a N. S. et essere suo buono figliuolo; et alla parte de' censi, mostra quella disposizione che soleva altre volte, cioè desiderare l'onore di N. S. et credo, quando con honore et contento di S. S. si potessi questa cosa acconciare, sarà nel proposito nostro, altrimenti aiuterà sempre lo honore di N. S. et sopra tucto credo potere affermare questo, che non sopporterà che alla S. S. injustamente sia torto un pelo, o che sia manimesso lo honore et stato della chiesa. Potete fare intendere questo a N. S. che credo doverrà intenderlo anchora per qualche altra via in nome del S. L. Io presto fede a questa tale dispositione, perchè mi pare ragionevole, et però secondo la natura del S. L. et essendo passate le cose di Genova, ne ci restando

alcuna evidente occasione più dì male tra l'Papa et S. L. a me pare questa cosa molto bene fondata et ragionevolmente da durare, et però la piglierei con due mani, et mi ingegnerei nelle cose che s'anno a fare costì, cominciare a dare qualche arra al S. L. che havessi ragione conservarsi in questa dispositione; laquale, come per altre mie havete intesso, giudico molto a proposito di N. S. et ne fo tanta stima, che non crederrei fussi per hora da pensare adaltro che stare su lo honorevole, et tanto mancho appruovo hora l'andata del Morosino a Napoli, la quale come per altra vi dixi, volgerei tucta a reputatione di N. S. et solamente vorrei facessi quello effecto di mostrare al Re, che Vinitiani in ogni evento hanno a reputare le cose del Papa proprie, post ponendo ogni altra praticha. Confermomi, come dico, in questa opinione parendomi si possa molto meglio fare per questa buona dispositione del S. L. poichè N. S. è in tucto libero, potrete ricominciare l'opera a questo proposito, advisandomi di quello segue, certificandovi, che 'l S. L. in tucto se excusa della colpa gliè suta data per le cose di Anchona, mostrando non ci essere suta alcuna sua opera, o intelligentia.

* * *

El S. L. mi ha facto intendere per lo imbasciadore nostro et pel suo, che è quì, che gli parrebbe Piero mio dovessi andare a questa festa, ne a me è parso poterlo negare con honore mio, et però attende a mettersi a ordine. Fatelo intendere a N. S., et pensate, se Piero per la facultà sua havessi a fare là una cosa più che un' altra, che exequirà fedelmente le voglie di N. S., et se vi trovassi di costà modo da fornirlo di qualche belle gioia, perchè comparissi più honorevolmente harei molto caro; vorrebbe esser cosa non molto grande, ma

buona, non so se tra le cose di N. S. ve ne sono; havendo pocho tempo a mettersi a ordine, bisogna ci aiutate di costà, come dico.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

Florentiæ,
die xxii. *Decembris,* 1488.

MAGNIFICO VIRO MAJORI MEO

JOHANNI DE LANFREDINIS,

ORATORI FLORENTINO. ROME.

IO CREDETTI, come vi scripsi per l'ultima, che queste cose di Perugia fussino posate, et così mi ha referito Ser Nicolò, che hieri tornò di là con la conclusione facta col Legato con grande unione, et dimostratione di amore. Hoggi ho la allegata dà Baglioni per fante a posta, molto diversa dalla opinione mia, di che harei maggiore dispiacere, se non credessi, che questo fussi più tosto disordine nato in sul facto, che ordine dato costì, et così ho scripto à Baglioni, confortandogli che lo accordo harà effecto a ogni modo, et a non innovare cosa alcuna. Desidero, che el più presto che potete, facciate intendere a N. S. questa cosa, et che vi si rimedi, non havendo altro fondamento; et havendo pure fondamento, desidero intenderlo, per non ingannare altri; che, come sapete, io mandai ser Nicolò a Perugia per ordine vostro, el quale nel tractare di quelle cose ha satisfacto al Legato, el quale ha usato di dire, che gli pare queste cose di Perugia sieno ridocte ad assai honorevole termine per N. S., et può havere compreso, che Baglioni naturalmente son ben disposti a S. Chiesa; havendo havuti molti stimuli

in contrario, et molte grand' offerte, et nondimeno sono ridocti a volere essere obedienti figliuoli di S. Chiesa, et a questo effecto è suta tucta la opera di ser Nicolò, et io gli ho accertati del buono animo di N. S. a ricevergli per figliuoli; et sopratticto, che non hanno da dubitare, che per la S. S. si tentassi, o innovassi cosa alcuna contra loro, perchè cosi mi havete più volte scripto, et io ve lo ho creduto, et credo. Se pure fussi altrimenti, et se io lo intenderò, saprò meglio come governarmi. Come per altre vi ho scripto, a me non pare tempo da seminare triboli, ne mettere in sospecto Perugini, et quelle altre terre circunstanti; perchè questo è apunto quello, che desidera chi vuole male a N. S. et forse anchora degl' altri, che mostrono volergli bene, e quali a qualche loro proposito lo vorrebbono mettere in travaglio, et io lo conforterò sempre a fuggirlo. Parevami male alterare le cose di Perugia inanzi alla conclusione dello accordo; hora mi pare non solamente disutile, ma anchora con qualche caricho, et per uscire di questa parte, a me pare necessario, o el remedio, o chiarirsi presto di questo humore.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

Florentiæ,
di xviii. *Jan.* 1488 (9).

MAGNIFICO VIRO

JOHANNI DE LANFREDINIS,

ORATORI FLORENTINO ROMÆ (*cito, cito*).

AD alcune vostre lettere ricevute a questi dì, che l'ultima è de' dì . . indugierò a rispondere a Firenze, non mi parendo importi lo indugio. Questa è solo per darvi ad-

viso, come essendo venuto quì el S. Virginio, mi ha facto intendere havere lettere fresche da cotesti suoi, che contano come Antonello Savello ha facto pruova di pigliare di furto Basciano, Castello del S. Giovanni da Cere, benchè non li sia riuscito. Pure che havessi seco e balestrieri, et provigionati della guardia di palazo, et per questo ha qualche dubio, che almancho non ci sia la permissione di chi pagha questi tali. E in grandissima molestia et alteratione, et credo ne harebbe facto qualche dimostratione di non pocho momento, se non che è suto confortato da me non fare altro, havendo maximamente promesso a Sua Signoria di scriverne a voi, et operarè che costì se ne faccia qualche dimostratione per Nostro Signore, in testimonio che queste cose non piaccino a S. S. et io ho affermato al prefato S. Virginio, che io sono certo al Papa duole questa cosa, et che ne farà qualche opera, che così sia. Prieghovi facciate in modo con la Santità Sua, che io non resti bugiardo; maximamente perchè a me pare, chè non sia a proposito di N. S. simili scandali, et tenere mal contento costui, maxime incose anche li paia havere giustificatione. Lui stima assai questo luogo per la importantia, et molto più per parergli essere manomesso, et stimato, et amato pocho. In effecto quando le cose procedessino più oltre, et che 'l Papa non facessi qualche segno d'essere mal contento del facto, mi pare in proposito di tentare qualche cosa, che lo facci più riguardare in futuro. A me pare che 'l muovere humori in questi tempi, che l' corpo non è ben disposto, sia uno provocarsi qualche malattia, et credo habbiate costà de' vicini, che si rallegrino assai d'ogni alteratione, che nascessi tra N. S. et il S. Virginio, et tanto più hora per essere ridocte le cose di Genova, come harete inteso, et essendo il Signor Ludovico molto satisfacto del Re, per quello che ha facto in queste

cose di Genova. Tucte queste ragioni concludono, che N. S. debba spegnere li scandali, et intratenere non solamente li amici, ma anchora quelli in chi non havessi cosi intera fede.

Io credo vi scrivessi da Firenze la risposta havuta da Napoli sopra lo intromettermi tra N. S. et il Re; laquale fu in effecto, che havendo inteso el Re la dispositione buona che io ho, penserebbe in che modo la volessi usare, et me la farebbe intendere; nè da poi ho havuto alcuno adviso di tale cosa, che forse ne è cagione lo havere più speranza nelle pratiche, per le quali è venuto costì Luigi da Casalnuovo, et il compagno. Advisatemi come procedono le cose loro, et quello che ha facto N. S. col Signore Francesco, per questo et per le cose di Siena.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

Pisis,
die XXIII. *Septembris*, 1488.

COPIA AL PAPA DI LORENZO DE' MEDICI, IN FAVORE DEL CONTE DI PITIGLIANO. (1488.)

Sanctissime, ac Beatissime Pater, etc.

Lo Ill^mo^. S. Conte di Pitigliano mi ha facto intendere, con grandissimo dispiacere suo, che la S. V. per una lungha instantia et importunità, che gli è suta facto, è stata costrecta di dare audientia à Madama Paula Ursina, sorella fù del quondam Duca d'Ascoli, la quale audientia è stata di qualità, che la prefata M. Paula a questi dì

ha preso animo di tentare la recuperatione di Fyano, Morluppo, et altri luoghi furono del prefato Duca, et sollicitato alchuni di quelli huomini contra lo Stato del Conte; di che quì si è preso qualche molestia, et pigliarìa ancora molto maggiore, se diffidassi puncto dalla bontà di V. S. dalla quale non nasce mai alchuno seme di scandalo, o alteratione. Supplico a quella, molto reverentemente, che a questa cosa si degni havere diligentissima advertentia, perchè el prestare che fa la V. S. delli orecchi sua grate et benigne, è di tanto momento, che a molti potrìa fare suspecti assai, et ad altro dare animo di diventare inquieto; et in questo caso, per li obblighi che ha questa Repubblica col S. Conte, sarìa constrecta procurare con la Santità Vostra al honore et indennità di Sua Signoria, alla quale questi Signori non sono mancho inclinati che alla proprìa. Però priegho con ogni humiltà la S. V., che le cose del prefato S. Conte li sieno così a cuore, come merita la servitù sua verso la S. V., la quale ha pochi huomini al mondo, che li sieno così devoti et obedienti come la Signoria Sua. Raccomandomi alla S. V.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

MAGNIFICO VIRO MAIORI HONORANDO

LAURENTIO DE' MEDICIS.

MAGNIFICE Vir, maior honorande, etc. Io ho differito scrivervi più che l'usato, tanto perchè andai a Bracciano, come vi scripsi, et tornai giovedì, come promissi; quanto perchè per la vostra de' 17. mi dite, che io m' ingegni in questa vostra absentia darvi meno noia che io possa, excepto che di qualche cosa importante. Et tor-

nando al S. Virginio, io gli portai un breve di Nostra Signore, el quale lo ringratiava efficacemente del successo della Anguillara, et confortava et pregava dello stato del S. Francesco, quando Sua Santità non ci sarà ad haverlo in protectione, et volere, come se affaticato di dargliele, affaticarsi di conservargliele, et in oltre molto dolcemente se li offeriva ristorarlo, et non potendo satiarsi, commetteva a me per un pocho di credenza, che supplissi, et così fè per parte di Sua Santità et vostra. Avisandovi che havendo questa vostra, et una da ser Piero de' 18. et havendovi decto per la mia quello che io disegnavo, et non sendomi risposto nulla, se non fussi che el Papa volse che andassi al Anguillara, per conforto di quelli huomini, et per più spalle, et dimostratione del S. Francesco, pensavo un pocho più al partirmi, dubitando non rispondendo, non errare. Et tornando al S. Virginio non potrei dire quanto mi vide volentieri, quanto mi carezò et honorò, et quanto li parve li fussi grata questa andata mia, et quanto mi pregò, et gravò ad tornarvi, et credo che alle volte sia utile rompere questa aria, et passare un pocho di tempo. Nella stantia mia mi fè molti parlari, prima mi domandò quello che io credevo dello accordo tra el Papa et Rè. Io gli dixi che el Papa si dimostrava bene disposto, quando in qualche parte ci adaptassi l' honore suo, et che anchora non intendevo che le cose si ristrignessino ad particulare nissuno, benchè mi fussino secrete, perchè le praticava per mano di Vinitiani. Allora mi dixe, ecci altri che pratichi; io gli risposi, credo el Cardinale di Napoli, et forse el S. Lodovico; lui mi dixe questa del S. Lodovico mi ha decto anche Sig. L. et in questa mi pare da sperare, et io la desiderrei molto, et vorrei che L. l' abbracciassi lui, perchè vi spererei più, et pure mollificherebbe qualche indepnatione del Rè, et io so quello che mi dico. Con-

fortate, L. adoperarsene, che ne acquisterà da ogni parte, et io mi adopererò a disporre el Rè, dove L. consiglierà; et già ho facto quello che lui mi dixe di confortare el Rè a indolcirsi col Papa, et parmi esser certo lo farà; quando voi ne intendete qualche cosa, vi prego me lo facciate intendere, et io farò el simile. Dixi di farlo, et della offerta sua lo ringratiai. Domandalo per quanto tempo s'era acconcio col Rè, rispose per un anno. Io gli dixi, se queste cose pigliano forma, e mi pare pocho tempo, ma la S. V. debbe havere pensato ad ogni cosa, rispose: io vi hò pensato per certo: el Rè mi ha facte molte offerte, simile el Duca, et credo pure me le observeranno, et quando non lo facessino, starei male patiente; et anche ho pensato, se queste cose s'acconciano che le doverranno intendere hora per hora, che mi sia buon mezo ad qualche forma de' facti mia col Re, et col Papa. Io notai, et risposi, che voi sempre che potessi et piacerlo et servirlo, lo faresti, perchè ero certo, che voi lo amavi, et benchè molte cose si sieno decte quà, io ho sempre veduto voi in dispositione, et di piacerlo, et di servirlo; et per quanto sia in voi, conservarvelo, &c.

Io fui poi all' Anguillara, confortai quelli huomini et li commendai del partito preso, et mostrai loro, cotesta Città et voi non abandoneresti mai el Conte, cioè el S. Francesco, come vedranno per experientia, et che stieno di buona voglia, che saranno sempre reguardati, et difesi; et tutti si confortorono assai; et fate conto, che sono tutti Orsini, maxime del S. Virginio, perchè hanno sito che non possono fare altrimenti, ne vivere sanza lui. La Terra è bella, forte, et, altrimenti che Bracciano, piena, populata, richa, et piena d'industria; a me è molto piaciuta; et anche per questo, conforto tanto più ad conservarvi el S. Virginio.

Carlo dal Pian di Meleto, per quanto io ho inteso, recusa e soldi vostri, per ventura per non essere in troppo buono accordo con Cammillo, per le cose di Castello; et ragionandovi el S. Virginio, commendò molto questo Carlo, et dixe, che non lo togliendo voi, el Duco non lo lascerà per pregio: non so anchora quello si farà per tre mila, è chiaro che non si condurrà; et Guido Baglioni mi fè molto pregare, che io vi raccomandi l'honore suo.

*. *. * *

Vostro,

Jo. Lanfredinus, Or.

Romæ,
dii xxvi. *Julii,* 1489.

MAGNIFICO

JOHANNI DE LANFREDINIS,

ORATORI FLORENTINO. ROME.

(*v. Illustrations, &c. ante, p.* 178.)

Io ho inteso con assai molestia il caso di vostro figliuolo, che m'è tanto più doluto, quanto m'è suto più nuovo, che non sapevo prima, che fussi malato. Se io non vi conoscessi di grande animo, et uso al male et al bene, userei molte parole più che non farò per sforzarmi di consolarvi, maxime collo exemplo di molte adversità che ho soportato io, che a voi sono però notissime. Chome si sia, io vi prego, che acconciate l' animo vostro colla dispositione di Dio; maxime perchè a vostro figliuolo si debbe più tosto havere invidia, che cordoglio; et a voi, et agl'

altri che restano, non mancheranno amici, et persone, che sempre reputeranno le cose vostre come proprie. Io, in specie, e per la compassione che ve ne ho, et per la fede antiqua et amore vostro alle cose mie, sarò sempre tale verso di voi, quale meritano, e le opere vostre, et lo officio di huomo grato; né dubito punto, che a ogni vostro caso si habbia a riparare, con honore et utile vostro; così fusse in potentia mia restituirvi il figliuolo, che Dio ha voluto per se. Confortatevi Giovanni, e usate la virtù vostra, et sperate in Dio, e nelli amici, che non sono per mancharvi mai. Ne altro.

Vostro,

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

In Firenze, a
di xviiii. *di Gennaio,* 1488 (9).

No. XVIII.

MAGNIFICO

LAURENTIO DE' MEDICIS, Etc.

AMICO NOSTRO CARISSIMO.

MATHIAS DEI GRATIA REX HUNGARIÆ, BOHEMIÆ, etc.

Magnifice Vir, amice noster carissime. Profectu[illegible] de nostra voluntate ad illam Civitatem Florentinam [illegible] Frater Stephanus, presentium lator; qui nobis inte[illegible] musicæ artis instrumenta, quoddam genus Organi de [illegible] preparet. Proinde rogamus, velitis eum commend[illegible] habere, efficereque, ut istic libere demorari possit, et si quibus in rebus recursum ad vos habebit, vestrumque imploraverit auxilium, nostri contemplatione, favorem ei non denegetis. Quod a vobis pro re gratissima capiemus, et dum opus erit, par pari referre curabimus.

Datum Bude, xx. *Augusti,*
anno Domini, MCCCCLXXXIII.

No. XIX.

MAGNIFICÆ DOMINÆ MEÆ

LUCRETIÆ DE MEDICIS,

DOMINÆ HONORANDÆ. CAREGII.

Magnifica Madonna mia,

Io vi rimando per Tommaso quelle vostre Laude, et Sonetti, et Ternarii, che mi prestasti quando fui costà. Presonne quelle donne un piacere extremo, et Madonna Lucretia, o vero Lucetia, haveva apparato a mente tutta la Lucretia, et di molti sonetti. Scrivonmi, che si raccomandano a voi tutti, &c.

Sarà ancora con questa un libriccino bianco, che è scripto; vorrei lo dessi al vostro, et mio buono Giovanni Tornabuoni. Sono alcune regole, che que' suoi fanciulli mi mandono a chiedere. Scrivo ancora a Giovanni, et a que' fanciulli rispondo, et così al maestro. Pregovi gli diate le lettere, et raccomandatemi a lui, che in ogni mio partito fo gran conto, et grande assegnamento nella affectione ha dimostro portarmi.

Sono stato qualche volta poi a Lorenzo, ne vi potrei mai dire, quanto volentieri m' ha veduto. De' fate per vostra fè di spiare il suo pensiero circa al fatto mio, che mi maraviglio molto che Piero s'avessi

lasciato perdere tempo, che è troppo danno. Intendo però è in casa M. Bernardo fratello di ser Nicolò. Pur non so, come si ragguaglierà el suo tessuto col mio, se già e non fussi quivi per istarvi continuo, che direi bene allora, che questa boccia fussi pure scoppiata. Ma non credo però, et pure vi prego tracciate il pensiero di Lorenzo, per vedere se io m'ò armare d'arme da giostra, o pur da battaglia. Credo vi sarà facile, et io sarò sempre d'accordo col comandamento, et volere di Lorenzo; perchè son certo vi vede più drento di me, et che mi porrà in luogo, che ci farà drento il mio honore, come ha facto sempre, et come la mia fede, et servitù meriterà. Io attendo a studiare. Non v' ho potuto attendere la promessa di quel libro, perchè la copia è a Firenze, e l'altra al cartolaio, che m' ha tenuto in lunga; come l'harenno, faremo nostro debito. Raccomandomi a voi, et vi prego mi raccomandiate a Lorenzo.

ANGELUS POLITIANUS.

Fesulis,
die 18 Julii, 1479.

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